UTHARK

NIGHTSIDE OF THE RUNES

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Thomas Karlsson

OUROBOROS

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Translated by Tommie Eriksson.

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INTRODUCTION

During nine days, the Nordic god Odin hangs in the world tree Yggdrasil. He hangs there sacrificed by himself, to himself. Without food or water, deeply wounded by his own spear, he endures the long nights in the tree. Odin's sacrifice in the tree is not an attempt to save man from his sins. He is not sacrificing himself to redeem a sinful world. Odin hangs in the tree by his own free Will. The Nordic world picture does not include belief in an original sin from which man and his world must be saved. The Nordic tradition does not emphasize any messiah. There are other reasons behind Odin's sacrifice. He hangs there for his own sake. He hangs there to gain wisdom and power. Odin hangs in the world tree in his quest for the outmost secrets of the universe, the secrets that he picks up from the depths in a scream of ecstasy.

Odin is not a messiah. He is in many ways a dark and demonic god, feared by most men. But he is a role model. Through his uncompromizing search for knowledge and power we can learn the secrets known only by him. Odin can become our teacher and initiator. He will not save us from any sins. But the path of Odin will reveal a magical initiation of knowledge and power. He can teach us to save ourselves from weakness and uncertainty. Odin can teach us the secrets of the runes.

This book is an introduction to runosophy, the wisdom of the runes, and to practical rune magic. The runes are dynamical symbols that characterize hidden forces. The outer shapes of the runes have changed through history, but the principles that they symbolize are today almost the same as during old Norse times. This book does not claim to include a historical description of runes or rune magic. It is an introduction to a rune magic that is constructed around practical work with the runes in modern time. The ambition, however, has been that the runosophy in this book shall be deeply rooted in his-

torical Nordic magic. Even if some of the runosophical knowledge in this book can not be recognized from archeological findings, the aim has been to describe keys to the same hidden reality that unites modern man with our ancestors in the past. Time has passed, but man is the same now and then. Just as the hidden reality.

To many people the spiritual quest is associated with heavenly spheres and a striving up towards the light. This reflects the great influence from religions like Christianity, Judaism and Islam. In these religions the divine world exists somewhere in a distant heaven and God is a masculine sky god of light. In the older Pagan traditions the divine could also be found on earth and inside it, in the underworld. There was not only a male god but also as powerful goddesses. Man sought not only the light. The wise also entered the dark in their spiritual quest. The night sky with all its stars was as important as the daylight sky. The underworld was as important to visit as the heavenly spheres. This is reflected in the old Norse tradition. In the Nordic tradition the darkness is a prerequisite of illumination. When Odin hangs in the world tree he gazes into the depth to find the runes. The secrets of existence are hidden in the underworld.

The runes consist of a light outer form and a dark inner dimension. Rune magicians during all times have sought the inner secrets of the runes, striving with an ironwill like Odin to discover the hidden meanings of the runes. The runosophy of this book is based on a disputed thought that the rune row is written in a cipher to hide its secret meaning from uninitiates. The hidden and dark side of the rune row has been called the Uthark. This has been viewed as the inner esoteric rune row which is hidden behind the more common rune row, called the Futhark. When discussing this type of occult thoughts there are no actual right or wrong, true or false. Many have doubted the historical anchorage of the Uthark and many deep and advanced magical books based on the Futhark have been written. But the Uthark has revealed itself as a very powerful tool for entering the secrets of the runes and for exploring their nightside.

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Chapter 1

THE SECRET WISDOM OF THE NORTH

The word rune in itself might give us a hint of what the runes really are. In the old Norse and Germanic languages, the word rune signifies ”secret”, ”mystery” or ”secret whisper”. The runes were not used in normal writing at first, but were magical symbols or signs to describe different forces and principles in the universe and human existence. These signs are not only the runes that we can recognize from the rune rows. In a deeper sense the runes are hidden forces that are illustrated with certain writing signs, but also with galders, songs and other magical practices. The runes and songs that Odin received after his initiation in the world tree are magical expressions of the hidden forces of the universe. Thus the runes can have many different meanings. In an outer aspect the word ”rune” denotes the old Norse writing sign, on a deeper level it denotes the forces of the universe and the complete occult spirituality.

The runes and the Norse spirituality are edified after a classification that indicates a high intellectual ability and a profound understanding of existence. Today we can only acquire a fraction of the knowledge possessed by the wise of ancient times, but through whole-hearted studies we can hopefully achieve what is essential of the secrets of the runes.

Many modern scientists and scholars tend to underestimate the old cultures and are reducing their thoughts and religious beliefs to a plain and trivial level. One can easily get the impression that the main part of the old spirituality was concerned solely with harvest cults and burial ceremonies. The myths are interpreted as if they where naive and puerile descriptions of life. The majority of all archeological findings are alleged as being grave artefacts. It seems here almost as if the interpretations are revealing more about the

world picture of the scientists than about the ancient religion. This positivistic world picture that has deeply influenced modern science claims that man has progressed from simple and primitive levels to more and more advanced and sophisticated ways of thinking. This is a conception that logically arises through the meeting of the old monotheistic world picture and the materialism of industrialism. It is an unconscious analogy to how one experience that the self is progressing from a child-state to the more complex world of the adult.

There is no reason to believe that we are now on a higher intellectual or spiritual level than during ancient times. If an analogy is drawn to mankind, perhaps we are now as children and the peoples of ancient times where adults, but from the generation of a different cycle. Or we are now senile and confused elders! The reason why old findings are described as graves can be the fact that they are connected to the feeling of the past being dead and buried. The absence of corpses in many of the so-called graves is interesting. In any case, we must be prepared to accept that the ancient man was more progressed than us, intellectually and spiritually. In fact, the industrial society and the post-industrial information society are the type of societies in which man has been forced to focus most of his time on material work, and has thus had less time to develop the spiritual and intellectual side. One can draw the conclusion that the materially most advanced societies might be in danger of producing the intellectually and spiritually weakest persons. In the old societies life was often very hard, but there were also long periods where the inner work could take place; sophisticated religious practice, advanced philosophical views on existence and rich traditions of myths and stories. Thanks to Snorre Sturlasson and others, parts of this knowledge have been kept alive until today.

Our knowledge about the runes and the old Norse spirituality is derived from the Eddas and the Sagas, from archeological findings, from cave paintings, picture and rune stones and village names. Besides the Eddas, a book by the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus from the 13:th century also presented views on the old Norse world picture. We can also derive information from the Roman Tacitus (55-120) in his Germania and from Adam of Bremens descriptions. For those who wish to explore the secrets of the runes it is of great

importance to investigate these sources. But one should not get stuck in archeological information. One must keep in mind that the runes and the old Norse tradition have gone through constant change. The knowledge have progressed and changed through the ages and with its practitioners. The runes and the myths are exoteric pictures of an esoteric reality that exists outside time. There is a profane time and there is a mythical time. We normally exist in profane time and here history occurs through death and return. Here we can reach knowledge through historical and archeological research. The mythical time is archetypal and lies beyond profane time and space. This is the time described by the myths. A shaman or magician can reach mythical time through extraordinary states of consciousness. The mythical time is, however, more easily accessed through knowledge on the profane level. Theory will enable practice, but one should not be too overly focused on archeological or historical details. The power that the runes are denoting is the same today as during the Viking age.

There are many theories regarding the origin of the runes. The four main theories are called the Latin theory, the Greek theory, the Etruscan theory and the Nordic theory. The Latin theory is most common today in academic circles. It is based on facts derived from findings and the similarities between certain runes and Latin letters. The Greek theory points out similarities between Greek letters and runes, like omega (Ω) and Odal (ᛟ). The Etruscan theory is based on the fact that certain findings of Etruscan origin were written with Etruscan letters but in old Norse language. The Nordic theory claims that the letters have their origin in the north and has influenced the other alphabets. There are also theories describing the runes as the letters used in Atlantis.

The Renaissance of the Runes

Rune magic, as we know it today, is derived from two main sources. One is from those who are researching old material and revitalizing the old tradition. We can call them the revivalists. The other source is from those who have kept patterns of ancient knowledge. We

can call them the preservers. The first category often has its base in academic circles. The other is more commonly found in the country side. Among the revivalists, the theories are often revolving on a level of intellectual and philosophical patterns. The magic of the preservers on the other hand, is more down to earth and mixed with conceptions that have arisen through the years, for example certain aspects of Christianity. It can be found in the so called "black arts" books that were written in the Nordic countries, like the Icelandic "En Isländsk Svartkonstbok från 1500-talet". The revivalists can be divided into three epochs or generations. The Swedish, the German and the Anglo-Saxon.

The rebirth of Nordic spirituality begun during the "great power" epoch of Sweden (1611-1718) and the preceding decades . During these times many grandiose books were written, for example the "Atlantica" by Olof Rudbeck that describes Sweden's connections to Atlantis. The interest in the occult and the old Norse tradition was growing. The storgoticism (megleogothicism) was a current that connected Sweden with the Goths and explored hidden and occult aspects in a national romantic way. Johannes Bureus (1568-1652), a today underestimated writer, was part of this current and was the first great runic revivalist. He collected a vast material about runes and rune stones. He meant that the runes had an occult side that was similar to the letter-mysticism and numerology of the Qabalah. He called this system of hidden runes "Adulrunes" (noble runes).

The next generation of revivalists can be found in Germany between the Romanticism and the Second World War. During the Romanticism and the following epochs the interest for ancient Nordic and Germanic religion was great. The Grimm brothers collected folk-tales and the Nordic mythological operas of Richard Wagner were popular all over the world. In nationalistic circles, the runes and Germanic spirituality was explored. The rune master of these circles was Guido von List (1848-1919). After a period of blindness caused by a surgical operation, he claimed to have been initiated into the mysteries of the runes. He wrote the very influential book "Das Geheimnis der Runen". List claimed, like Bureus, that there are hidden meanings in the runes. He describes the triple levels of the runes called "kalas". The first level is the outer exoteric level. The

second is the inner esoteric and the third is the most secret "Armanen" level. The Armanen was according to List the secret initiated runic priests. Those who had been initiated by Odin. Guido von List created his own runic row called the "Armanen-Futhark" and it consists of eighteen runes which represent the eighteen runes or songs that Odin receives in the Havamal. List wanted to re-establish the old Germanic spirituality and the cult of Odin in an Odinistic (Wotanistic) movement. List had many followers and a Guido von List society and an Armanen society were created. The Edda society led by Rudolf Gorsleben and the Germanen order founded by Hermann Pohl were inspired by List. Many of these societies became increasingly political and were partly involved in the creation of the Nazi party NSDAP. The swastika and the use of the two Sieg runes in the SS are derived from List. Another follower of List, Siegfried Adolf Kummer included rune-yoga, rune-yodling, rune-mudras and magical circles connected to the Zodiac. He was forced to escape from Germany when the Nazis reached power. Friedrich Marby (1882-1966) was a rune magician who was more independent in his relation to List. He developed a runic gymnastics that might have inspired the rune-yoga of Kummer. Marby connected the runes to cosmic energies that could be channeled through the body. He was of Swedish origin and traveled to Sweden in 1928 to find the roots of the runes. In Germany he was imprisoned by the Nazis and sent to a concentration camp during the war.

The third generation of revivalists can be focused to the Anglo-Saxon and American parts of the world. From the seventies until today there has been a great activity in publishing books and starting societies. Some Odinistic societies are focusing on a race-mystical neo-Paganism, while others are purely occult groups.

The NordicWorld Picture

If the magical language of the runes is to be understood one must have a basic knowledge about the Nordic myths. We will not enter into these now, but one should study the Eddas, the Havamal and the Völuspa. "Gods and Myths of Northern Europe" by H R Davidsson

is a basic introduction to Nordic mythology.

There are numerous important principles in the Nordic world picture which we will now discuss. In many descriptions of the Nordic mythology one can get the impression that it is similar to the Bible. This is of course due to a later influence from Christianity. Balder as Jesus, Loke as Satan, Ragnarök as Armageddon etc, are all later interpretations. Similar aspects might exist in many myths but there are here obvious differences in the basic structures of the religions. The bible is based on the monotheistic and linear world views: there is a belief that there is a god who created the world in the beginning of time. Then time marches on until it is all destroyed in Armageddon, after which the righteous will reach paradise. This thought is a unique abnormality shared by the monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the Pagan religions time moves in cycles. The Nordic world picture is built on cyclic time. Worlds are created and destroyed in a way that resembles the cycles of nature. Also, the world was not created by a god, but came into existence through a meeting of polar energies. In the oldest Pagan religions there are not only a god, but a god and a goddess. There are also numerous polar powers that the world arises from. The Nordic myth of creation describes this through the two main primordial principles Nifelheim and Muspelheim, the realms of heat and cold. These are the two primal principles of the universe. This thought was very important during the Romanticism. Goethe adapted these ideas in his works of alternative natural science.

Muspelheim - fire, heat, expansion, convex.

Nifelheim - ice, cold, the astringent, concave.

The World-Existence arises from the great nothingness - Ginnungagap - through a balance between these two primal opposites.

The first being formed is Ymer, the primeval giant, whose name means ”twin”. He has a twin nature and is described as twin headed and/or a hermaphrodite. The twin sexed/headed primeval being can be found in many occult traditions.

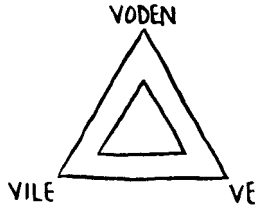
There are two main races or kinds of higher beings in old Norse mythology. The giants or the thurses are the oldest beings and belong to an ancient giant race. The gods are younger and created the world by slaying Ymer. The younger gods fighting against the older gods/giants of chaos is a common mythological theme. In Nordic mythology there is a struggle between the giants and the gods, but it is not obvious who are in fact the good ones. Unlike the monotheistic religions the Nordic tradition did not use terms like good or evil. The universe was viewed as a struggle, but also as a co-operation between different powers. The giants are in possession of the greatest wisdom. Odin gains wisdom through the giant Mimer and he is taught the secrets of the runes by the giant Böltorn. The giants are dark powers or chaotic forces in possession of ancient hidden wisdom and power.

Time is connected to destiny and it is woven by the three dark Nordic goddesses called the Norns: Urd, Verdandi and Skuld. They represent the past (Urd), the present (Verdandi) and the future (Skuld). Urd means ”fate” or ”primeval” (Ur), Verdandi ”being” and Skuld ”result” . Skuld is connected to the idea of a karmic energy which can be used or gained. The web of the Norns connects the universe. The runes are the different powers or aspects of the web. Through the runes the magician can influence the web of destiny. Odin’s dark blood brother Loke is also called Locke, the spider weaving a web. He invented the net. Loke is the ”trickster” or ”culture hero” who attaches the newly created universe and forms the web that existence is built on. From Loke, both humans and gods learn how to use nets. These nets are the ability to control ones destiny. Loke can be compared to Prometheus, a figure who reveals secret and forbidden knowledge.

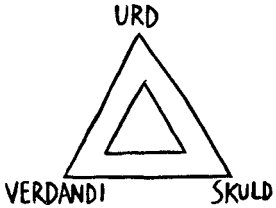
In the Nordic world picture, space is created when Voden[1], Vile and Ve slay Ymer and create the world from his body. From chaos, order is created through the triad of gods. Space is held up by the four cardinal dwarves Nordre, Södre, Östre and Västre.

Time is created through the female triad of Urd, Verdandi and Skuld when they are weaving the thread of destiny.

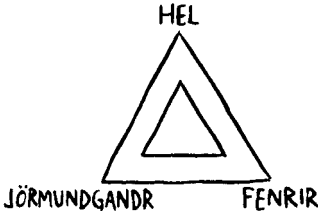
There is also a dark triad of demonic beings who have important



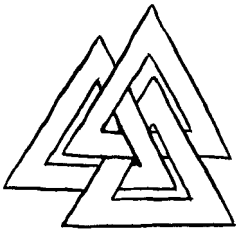
The triad of arising.



The triad of being.



The triad of destruction, or passing away to new arising.



The three triads intertwined as a whole.

roles in the end of the world in the great transformation of Ragnarök. This triad represents the disintegrating and destructive forces, which enable rebirth and change. It is Loke's three children with the giantess Angerboda; Hel, Jörmundgandr (The Serpent of Midgard) and The Fenriz Wolf.

Thus there are three triads:

Voden, Vile and Ve: the creating triad which creates space.

Urd, Verdandi and Skuld: the triad of being and time.

Hel, Jörmundgandr and The Fenriz Wolf: the triad of destruction and departure.

The four dwarfs represent the four directions, the four cardinal directions on a surface. In the Nordic spirituality two more directions are used which makes six in all. The directions up and down are also included and are represented by the eagle and the reptile (Nidhögg), the two foremost archetypes for the sky and the underworld. The eagle and the reptile are the two poles of the vertical line and they are interacting through the communication carried by the squirrel Ratatosk. In all ancient religions and world views the world pillar is of great importance. The world pillar is the vertical line that exists in the centre of the world and links what is above with what is below. The bird and the reptile are archetypal symbols of the two poles of the pillar and the dragon symbol represents the unity of the poles and the above with the below. In the Nordic tradition the world tree Yggdrasil is the world pillar. Shamans, magicians and witches could travel between the worlds on the world pillar. They could climb up to the worlds of the sky or travel down to the underworld. The world pillar became like a steed for the magicians. Thus the world pillar in the Nordic traditions was called "Odin's steed". Ygg or Yggr is an epithet of Odin and "drasil" denotes his steed.

Nordic Numerology

Numbers have always been of great importance in religion, myth and magic. Numbers seem to be part of the basic structures of the

1. According to Snorre Sturlasson Voden is the oldest name for Odin. The alliteration creates VVV.

mind. Even nature might be constructed from mathematical principles. Some philosophical (Pythagoreans and Platonists) and mystical systems (Qabalah) describes that everything is constructed according to mathematical principles and that numbers are representing aspects of existence. Also in the Nordic tradition numbers are of great importance. The essential numbers in the Nordic tradition are built upon the triad. Triads of gods and goddesses are creating the basic structure of the world. There are 3 x 3 worlds. Odin hangs in the Yggdrasil 9 nights and is taught 18 (2 x 9) power songs. The triad is a pivotal idea in the whole of the Nordic spirituality. From two opposites the third is born. This idea lived on in the Hegelian thought of thesis-antithesis-synthesis.

One (1). The number one, important in monotheistic theology and platonic-hermetic philosophy is not as significant in Nordic spirituality. Yggdrasil as the world pillar corresponds to this number.

Two (2). The number two is more significant. The world is created through two poles : Nifelheim and Muspelheim. Not even the primal being Ymer can be connected to the number one, his twin aspect and connection to Tuisto (tvistra-to separate), assigns him to the number two. The eagle and the dragon Nidhögg are two polar principals. Hugin and Munin (the ravens of Odin) can be connected to the number two, and also Gere and Freke (Odin's wolves). Odin and Loke are a magically complementary couple.

Three (3). The number three is the cardinal number representing the eternal movement in the universe (thesis-antithesis-synthesis). A triad of gods Voden (Odin), Vile and Ve - structures the universe. Odin, Hönur, Lodur (probably the same triad but with altered names) give man the qualities of the soul. Urd, Verdandi and Skuld are rulers of time. The number three is the foundation of the runes and the power songs.

Four (4). The number four represents order. The symbol of this number is the sun wheel (swastika) which is the symbol of Thor. He fights the forces of chaos and maintains order. The world is supported by the four cardinal dwarfs Nordre, Södre, Östre and Västre. Four stags are chewing on the buds of the world tree and can be viewed as four necessary destructive cardinal forces making the world order

and the number four move in a cycle.

Five (5). The number five is connected to time. A week in the old Germanic society consisted of five days and was called a "fimmt". The pentagram was used in later old Norse magic.

Six (6). The number six is connected to space. There are six directions (north, south, east, west, up and down).

Seven (7). The number seven is associated with "the other side". The rainbow bridge Bifrost is sometimes described as having three colours, sometimes as having seven.

Eight (8). The number eight represents the order of the runes. The Elder Futhark is divided into three groups of eight, called ættir. The Scandinavian Futhark can also be divided into two groups of eight (three groups of five and six are more common however). The 33 stave Northumbrian rune row is divided into four ættir of eight and one separate rune. There is also a very uncommon rune row of 40 runes that can be divided into five ættir of eight. The magical practice of the runes can be divided into eight kinds. (Havamal 144).

Nine (9). The number nine is the most important number in Nordic spirituality. In the Qabalah the number ten represents the total, in the Nordic tradition the number nine fills the same function. There are nine worlds and in the underworld there are nine more. Odin hangs nine nights in the Yggdrasil and gains nine power songs. In the Ynglinga-tale, Snorre Sturlasson presents Odin has having nine magical abilities. The three triangles joined in the "valknut" is the symbol of completion, the number nine and Odin.

Cult-Places

The knowledge about the Nordic tradition can not be found simply by researching written material on this subject. Many secrets are only revealed when one visits the old Nordic cult-places. These areas are often ridiculed by common archeology; they are described simply as being graveyards or playgrounds. An initiate in magical or religious thoughts will realize that the cult-places are powerful

areas and important centres surrounded by advanced cults. The stone labyrinths, the so-called ”trojeborgar” have been described as being playgrounds. They are in fact created through an advanced knowledge of the power of the ground and the area in general. The paths of the labyrinth will deeply influence the mind. It is claimed that these labyrinths are pictures of the mind and the brain. To enter these ancient stone labyrinths is a form of initiation. It stages an entry into the centre of the underworld where the core of the soul and secret of existence; the diamond, can be found.

Ship-tumuli were not only places where the dead were burned but were also used in astral travels to the worlds beyond our own. They were constructed with the most intricate knowledge about the directions and the magnetic area of the tumulus. The construction itself reveals a logic in its form and place. The fact that they also resemble wombs is no mere coincidence. They represent wombs from which the living can be born into new worlds. These tumuli are the proof of the thought that the grave and the womb are the two gates to the other side and that they are, mystically, the same. When we die we are born and when we are born we die. The old cult-places are placed in relation to each other. They are constructing a gigantic net. One way to explore these places is using a divining rod or a pendulum. Earth energy and magnetism have much information to give. The stones are not placed randomly but where the power is strongest, or where it naturally creates vacuums in time and space, which enables journeys between the worlds.

Chapter 2

THE UTHARK AND THE RUNES

The Rune rows

The rune row is not an alphabet comparable to Greek or Roman alphabets. The rune row begins with another set of letters f, u, th, a, r, k etc. Thus the rune row is called the Futhark. This rune row and its order of runes were found on Gotland, on the Kylverstone, and on other items like the Vadstenabracteate and the Grumpanbracteate. The most common theory regarding the origin of the runes is that they are derived from Greek or Roman alphabets. But the fact that the runes are placed in a Futhark makes this rather unlikely, since it is no abc-alphabet. The position of the runes indicates a strong connection to the old Nordic spirituality and world picture. This might indicate that the runes appeared independently in the old Norse tradition. The runes were not originally letters used for writing, but magical symbols. This is made clear through the oldest runic findings which reveal a magical character. Only after the cultural decline in the Viking age were the runes degraded to trivial use, something that can be observed on the numerous rune stones. Even after the arrival of Christianity, the runes were used for protection, also in churches. In the church of Hemse on Gotland, the priests pulpit is protected with a couple of Futharks. If the Christian powers could not protect the church, they must have thought it best also to let the old runes of Odin be of assistance.

The elder rune row consists of 24 runes and this is the most common row in magical use. The rune row is divided into three ætts, each ætt has eight runes. There is the ætt of Frej, of Hagal and of Tyr. The younger rune row has sixteen runes. This row exists in

two versions, the Norwegian-Swedish and the Danish (also called the ”common”) rune row. It was not used as frequently in magical practise. There is also an Anglo-Saxon rune row of 33 runes where the Elder Futhark is extended with nine (!) additional runes. Even if the Scandinavian 16 stave rune row was not commonly used in magical practise, it has had great influence on magical traditions through the Armanen Futhark of Guido von List. It is thought to represent the powersongs and runes that Odin obtained during his initiation. Although the Armanen Futhark is lacking in historical evidence it is used in many modern runemagical circles.

A disputed version of the Elder Futhark is the ”Uthark”. According to professor Sigurd Agrell, who published books on the subject during the nineteen thirties, the first rune should be placed last. Thus a rune row with a new meaning, in accordance with numerological theories will arise. In his book ”Lapptrummor och Runmagi” Agrell writes:

”At the positioning of the runes in a Futhark (one beginning with the runes f, u, th, a etc) a cryptographic trick has been used: the last rune is placed before the others. Thus it has been made impossible for the uninitiated to know the real order of the runes”.

In ”Runornas Talmystik och dess antika förebild” and ” Senantik Mysteriereligion och Nordisk Runmagi” Agrell reveals similarities between the numerology of certain antique mystical cults and the runic tradition. The problem of the Uthark theory is the lack of findings to support it. There are some occasional findings that could be Utharks, but the first rune might only be missing. The fact that the Uthark theory makes sense from a numerological perspective of the Nordic tradition supports its probability.

It could be that Agrell is right in his thought that the rune row was enciphered, only to be recognized by initiates. We know that the Nordic magicians created numerous secrets and hidden runes and that the runic tradition consists of many levels. The Futhark could be the outer exoteric rune row while the Uthark the inner esoteric.

The 24 stave Elder Futhark is commonly used in runemagical circles. It exists in two main versions used by different practitioners. Some are placing the ”d” -Dagaz- last, while other are placing the

”o”- Odal- last. The latter version is derived from the Kylver stone, but the first is more common. In German rune magical circles and among those inspired by national Romanticism and Guido von List, the Armanen Futhark is used. Some are also leaning towards the race mystical theories of List while others are excluding this. In Sweden the Uthark has been used by some runemagical groups. The 24 stave Elder Futhark is presented by Edred Thorsson, in his books ”Runelore” and ”Futhark - a handbook of rune magic”, and Freya Aswynn in her book ”Leaves of Yggdrasil”. Thorsson is describing the 16 stave Scandinavian Futhark in ”Northern Magic” and the Armanenrow in the book ”Rune Might”.

The Uthark is a magically potent version of the rune row. Even if its historical anchorage can be discussed, it corresponds to the language and mythology of the Old Norse culture. The wealth rune Feh representing the goal and reward is placed last, which also seems logical. Also, Ur denotes the wild primeval ox while Feh represents the tame cow, which creates two opposites in polarity in the Uthark. We will now explore the Uthark.

The Uthark

ᚢ UR (u): The Ur rune denotes the primeval state and the origin. The Ur rune is the Ur (original)-ox or the Ur-cow which in many myths represents the state before creation. In Nordic mythology it is the cow Audhumbla. If we were to turn the Ur rune so that it would look like a normal ”u” we can see how it illustrates the horns of the animal. From the udder of Audhumbla four rivers of milk are flowing, feeding the other primeval being Ymer. The rivers of milk are the inherent nourishing force of the original state that spreads out in the cardinal directions of space. From a saltstone clad with white frost Audhumbla licks out the god-triad of Voden, Vile and Ve. The saltstone is the crystal shaped form in which gods and runes can be found. This is the potentiality of the original state which is actualized and manifested through the following runes of the Uthark. The crystal returns in the Hagal rune. The

Ur rune also illustrates Ginnungagap, the wide-open crack of primeval chaos and the original emptiness. The Ur rune is the womb from which everything is created and born.

THURS (th): This is the rune of the giants and the thurses. It represents the two primal forces of chaos, the giant realm Muspelheim, the world of fire and Nifelheim, the world of ice. These worlds are inhabited by fire-thurses and rim-thurses respectively. Thurs represents the extremes - the forces and worlds that are outside the order of the cosmos. These are the forces of darkness that are both frightening but also contain the outmost wisdom and power of creation. The two primal forces of chaos are driving the world forward and are preventing it from becoming stagnant. The forces of chaos are in the end destroying the gods and their world, to enable the creation of a new world. Thurs is "the other", the anti-thesis and the opposite. Thurs is the world of giants, trolls and all dark beings. The giants are often fighting with the gods. But the gods are receiving their wisdom from the giants who are in possession of the utmost wisdom. The giants are a race of gods who appeared before the Æsirs. The twin-being Ymer belongs to the Thurs rune and the number two. Thurs is the rune of witchcraft and dark magic.

AS (a) : The rune of the Æsirs. This rune belongs to Odin and the gods. It represents the wind and the breath. Odin is the god of storms and winds. He gives life and spirit to the first human couple: Ask and Embla. The As rune is connected to önd, which is breath and spirit - the spiritual core man is given by Odin. In the Uthark it is the third rune, three being the divine number. The original gods are appearing in triads : Voden, Vile and Ve and Odin, Höner and Lodur. The As rune is the synthesis of "Ur" and "Thurs". As is the rune of the power of creation - the rune that shapes cosmos from chaos. The first Æsirs kills the giant Ymer and create the world from his body.

REID (r) : The rune of order. This is the rune of the god Thor and is called the "Wagon rune". Thor is reidatyr, the wagon-god who rides in his wagon with his hammer Mjölnir, to fight the forces of chaos. This rune is connected to the number four

(the wheel, the cross etc) and is also the fourth rune in the Uthark. The Wagon rune also represents the swastika and the sun cross (an equal armed cross in a circle) which illustrates the wheel of the wagon and the journey of the sun in the sky where it banishes the forces of darkness. The Reid rune symbolizes the four seasons and Thor is the god of agriculture and the protector of farmers. The name of the rune is also connected to riding and illustrates the four legs of the animal. Reid also denotes ”right” and ”rita” - cosmic order. Thor is the upholder of order. If the Tyr rune illustrates the power of laws, the Reid rune makes sure that the laws are followed. Reid is connected to agriculture, the wheel of the year and the cycles of nature. Life is a journey through different levels of change, loss and return. Reid as the Wagon rune denotes this journey. The four cardinal dwarves belong to this rune. The Reid rune is the rune of rhythm and Thor marks the time, the pulse and rhythm of existence with his hammer. Reid corresponds to the blood and the heartbeats.

KEN (k) : The rune of fire. This rune is called the ”Torch rune”. The name of the rune has numerous meanings. Ken means torch but can also signify ”to know” or ”to feel”, as in in the Swedish word ”känna” but even more clearly in the German/Dutch ”kennen”. The word is connected to art (SW: konst). The Torch rune is the inner fire which gives light in the form of intellectual illumination as well as feelings. This inner fire is ruled by the Nordic Prometheus-figure Loke, whose name is connected to Loge, the deity of the flame. The Torch rune belongs to the realm of Muspelheim and beings of fire like Surt and the sons of Muspel. The Torch rune can be dangerous, similar to illumination. The rune brings both heat and light as well as destruction. One of the names of the rune is ”kaun” which can be interpreted as ”a boil”. The heat can bring illness, but the fire can also destroy illness.

GIFU (g) : The name of this rune means giving or to sacrifice. In the Nordic spirituality, gifts and giving is essential. In the Havamal it is written about gifts : ”So hospitable and generous no one I found, that he was not glad when given gifts, and

no one so rich that a reward to him was weary" and "With his friend, man should be friendly and reward gift with gift". The Nordic tradition views life in a Karmic pattern that equal demands equal. Thus the advice is given not to give or ask for too much: "Better is not to ask or pray, than to offer (ON: blota) too much, gift seeks gift in return; better not sacrificed than too much wasted". The relation to the powers in Nordic spirituality is not obsequious as in monotheistic religions. In the north it is a question about gifts and gifts in return. A religious foundation for this is the fact that the gods did not create mankind. The first humans were logs of wood; Ask and Embla. These were given spirit, understanding and feelings by the gods Odin, Höner and Lodur. The gods gave man soul-qualities: happiness, force and success and thus receive gifts from man in return. The Gifu rune reveals an exchange of gifts, knowledge and force. It reveals how the above communicates with the below and how they are united in the middle. This rune also has erotic aspects which are connected to the sexual interchange between persons. The rune also represents the six directions, the four elemental directions and up and down. The Gifu rune is often found on round sacrificial breads, marked with the x-sign. The most important sacrifice or gift is the self-sacrifice. No magical power or wisdom can be reached without this process. The shape of the rune denotes a man standing with outstretched legs and arms. Odin, the archetype of magicians, received the runes by sacrificing himself to himself: "...given to Odin, myself to myself".

WYNJA (w) : The rune of happiness. The name of this rune means "happiness" "joy" and "pleasure". The gothic form of Wynja also denotes pastureland " a place where the cattle can be at ease". The joy of the rune denotes a place and a state of mind. Wynja is an old Germanic term meaning "perfection". Words like "wish" in English and "wunch" in German are related to this term. The rune represents the fulfillment of wishes and the following joy. The rune of happiness gives power and ability to "win", also a related word. The rune is the seventh in the Uthark. Seven is traditionally associated with perfection, which suits the name of the rune. It corresponds

to the spectrum of seven colours. The rainbow is the bridge to worlds of joy. The seventh heaven is a concept of a place of bliss and happiness and Wynja is denoting both a place and a state of mind. The number seven has also been frequently used in Germanic magic denoting luck. Wynja corresponds to the god Frey who according to Snorre not only rules the grains of the earth but also the sunshine and peace among men. "He brings the mortals peace and pleasure" according to Adam of Bremen.

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✳

HAGAL (h): The Hail rune Hagal is one of the most important runes in rune magic. It contains the other runes. The Hagal rune is the esoteric counterpart of the promethean fire. But instead of fire it is ice that falls down from the sky, the world of the gods, down to the earth, the world of man. This is a force that can cause great destruction but also contains great knowledge. The Nordic word "hagel" originally meant "stone" "crystal" or "crystal-stone". The word crystal is borrowed from Greek where its counterpart meant "that which froze". Crystals, diamonds and gems were believed to be pieces that had fallen from the "crystal-sky" - the eighth heavenly and divine sphere that can be found beyond the seven planetary spheres. In the Scandinavian Futhark the shape of the rune (✳) illustrates the connection to the hail. This form can easily be used as a sigil for a hailstone. The arms are then linked by a line that is surrounded by a circle. This symbol reveals the crystal shape of the rune and in this shape, all other runes can be found. In an extended form (✳) this rune has eight arms, which reveals its position in the Uthark. The number eight is connected to the word "ætt". Hagal is the "Mother rune" that contains the potential of all the other runes immanent. As the eighth rune in the Uthark it gives birth to the ætts of eight runes each. Hagal is related to Hel and the realm of cold, Nifelheim/ Nifelhel. The English word "hail" (both meaning the ice and the greeting) and "Hel" are connected. Hagal can also be viewed as a piece of the original saltstone from which the primeval cow Audhumbla licked out the ancestor of the gods.

NAUD (n) : The ninth rune is the need rune. Naud denotes "need" and above all "necessity". It is the rune of fate and it is connected to the three Norns who are weaving the web of destiny. Naud is also the rune of magic and initiation. Magic is the ability to influence destiny, a knowledge that sometimes not even the gods possess. Not even the gods can influence the decisions of the Norns. Destiny is the thread of life that man has been given. Skuld, the youngest of the Norns is veiled since she represents the future. She cuts the thread when the time comes for a person to die. Destiny is connected to time and death. The magical initiation is the path to control destiny and to enter the deepest levels of the realm of death. Odin hangs nine nights in the Yggdrasil deeply wounded by spears to be initiated in the mysteries of the runes. The realm of death consists of nine worlds. The distance is nine days by horse, as we know from Hermod's journey to bring back Balder and thus change destiny. Naud is the ninth rune in the Uthark. The fact that the number nine is connected to the Naud rune is revealed on the Sigtuna-amulet where it is written: "have nine necessities, wolf". The connection between the Norns and the number nine is reflected in the late Edda poem "The Sun-Song" where it is told: "On the chair of the Norns, for nine days I sat". In Nordic magic the number nine is recurrent. The Icelandic books of black arts teach us to carve nine Naud runes, thus revealing the connection between the number nine and this rune. Nine is 3x3 and is thus a higher aspect of the magical power of the trinity. The three witches in Macbeth (that might have been inspired by the Norns) chant: "thrice to thine and thrice to mine, and thrice again to make up nine" . Nine is not just destiny and necessity, but also the possibility to influence fate. Naud is time, destiny, necessity and death, and thus also rebirth. The Naud rune is connected to the nine months of child-birth and the pains involved is an initiation into a new reality. In Nordic spirituality death and life are intimately connected. Certain aspects of the initiatoric meanings of the Naud rune continue in the eighteenth rune (9x2).

IS (i) : The meaning of the Ice rune is as the name reveals connected to ice, winter and cold. It is the rune of Nifelheim and it represents the primal forces of the Ice-realm: the astringent and materializing. The fire and the heat make water into steam rising upwards, while the cold makes the water fall back to the earth. For this reason the forces of the ice is associated with the materializing principle. The cold makes the souls return to the earth from heaven. Thus the Ice rune has been used to "cool down" minds that are in to great affect or in psychotic states. The Ice rune is the rune of the self and represents concentration and focus. It is focusing, absorbing and egocentric. The Torch rune corresponds to feelings and the Ice rune to thoughts. Its forces are like the clear ice. In the ice things from the past are kept. The ice belongs to the realm of death and its lowest regions Nifelhel. In the old north , the expression "to make cold" meant to kill someone. The ice belongs to the period of rest of the winter and of death: the bears hibernation and the state just before rebirth. In the Nordic tradition the ice represents the fifth element. The Ice rune resembles a spike and it corresponds to its qualities. The Ice rune nails things down.

JARA (j): The Year rune. Jara represents the year and especially a good year. The rune represents a good harvest and fertility. In the traditional Futhark it is the twelfth rune which can be connected to the twelve months of the year. In the Uthark it is number eleven. The number eleven is connected to harvest and fertility magic as Sigurd Agrell reveals in his books. In "Runornas Talmystik och Dess Antika Förebild" Agrell writes that an ancient mystical numerological observation may have connected the number eleven with fertility and yearly harvest. A solar year (365 days) excedes a lunar year (354 days = 12 x 29 1/2) with eleven days. These eleven days were believed to have a mystical influence on the growth of the year. This does not seem unlikely when viewed in the light of the fact that the sun and the moon were used to measure time in ancient days. The rune consists of two stylized half-moons circulating around each other. They are connected to Frey and Freya and their fertile power that contributes to a good

year. In the Edda, Frey gives the female giant Gerd eleven golden apples. They correspond to the fertile power of Frey.

PERTRA (p): Pertra is often called the Rock rune. The word Pertra is generally viewed as related to the Greek and Roman word for rock or stone, which is "petra". The rune is also called "peorth" and is connected to the English word "birth". Mythologically the god is born out of the world-mountain (Mithras etc). The rock is mother earth from which womb life is born, but it can also represent the night sky (Nuit etc), the womb from which the gods are born. This would explain the placing of the rune as the twelfth in the Uthark. The night sky and the twelve signs of the Zodiac are the womb from which life is born. But the place of the rune is far from obvious. On certain findings the Pertra rune and the following Eihwaz rune are exchanged. On the Kylverstone the Pertra rune is before Eihwaz but on the bracteate findings the Eihwaz rune precedes the Pertra rune. Runes twelve and thirteen are the centre of the rune row. The exchange of places here could denote the central dynamics of the rune row. There is a numerological logic in both placements. But the fact is that both runes are very mystical and their use declined already in the fifth century. Pertra can also mean "secret". Pertra is not only the womb but also the grave and that would correspond to its place as the thirteenth rune, since this number is traditionally associated with death. Pertra is sometimes interpreted as the bowl used in the casting of dice or of runes. In the Anglo-Saxon rune song it is said "Peorth is both game and joke for the proud...., where warriors sit in the beerhall happy together" - Peorth byth symble plega and hleter wlancum Thor wigan sittah on beorsele blithe ætsomne. Pertra can be understood as a game where chance decides the turn of the dice or which rune turns up. This illustrates the wheel of destiny and Pertra is the rune of destiny from which all other runes are born. Pertra is the power of fate and Lady Fortuna. It can also be so that the runic poem originally revealed another meaning where the word for warriors: "wigan" was "wifan", "wifes" and the word for beerhall "beorseele" was "beorthseele", "hall of birth" . The runic song would then say that Peorth is "game and joke for

the proud, where wifes are sitting in the hall of birth happy together". This would reveal the birth aspect of the rune, and its fertility. Perchta is a deity of death and fertility who rides together with Odin during the wild hunt. She lives in the rocks or in the underworld.

EIHWAZ (ei): Eihwaz, also called "eoh" corresponds to the Yew tree. On numerous findings this rune precedes Pertra. But the place number thirteen suits this rune, since it is connected to death. In northern countries the Yew tree has been a typical graveyard-tree. It is also a symbol of death and eternal life, since it can become over two thousand years old. The Anglo-Saxon rune song says: "Eoh is on the outer side not a happy tree, hard, earthbound, the guardian of fire, supported by roots, a joy on inherited land". The Yew tree is a holy tree in the Nordic tradition and the sacrificial tree in Uppsala was probably a yew tree. The Yew tree represents the world tree Yggdrasil. The Yggdrasil has often been believed to be an Ash tree, but it is called "eternally green" which fits the Yew tree. The Yew tree was also called "Needle Ash". Eihwaz represents the world pillar which unites the worlds above with the worlds below. Eihwaz is the communication and the journey between the worlds. Odin has through his initiation the knowledge to do such travels and the Yggdrasil is the steed of Odin. The Yew tree is a very poisonous tree. Properly prepared, the poison can be a powerful hallucinogen. Hallucinogens have been used in all old cultures as a method to "ride" between the worlds. The Yew tree was also used to make magical amulets and wands but above all to make bows. The god of the Yew tree is Ull, the god of hunting and archery. In the Grimnismal it is told that he lives in Ydalir, the valley of the Yew trees: "The Ydalir is the home of Ull; there he founded his house". Eihwaz is the arrow and the pillar and represents the phallus. Pertra is the womb. Together they form the middle of the rune row.

ᛉ ALGIZ (z or -R) This rune is commonly called the Elk rune since its name can be interpreted as "elk". The horned look of the rune also points in this direction. Algiz represents the animal kingdom, and the horned god (these aspects also corresponds to Sol). Algiz is not only the elk but also other horned animals such as deers. Four deers are eating the leaves of the world tree and can be connected to this rune. The name of the rune has many meanings. Algiz means "protection" and it is known that this rune is the classical protection rune, especially when four Algiz runes are placed in an "Ægishjalmur" (✳) - the helm of dread, a symbol from the dragon Fafnir. Algiz is also connected to the word "ahl" which means "sacred place". According to Agrell the rune is connected to "alcis" which is the divine twins, worshiped by the Germanic tribes according to Tacitus. This might be Frey and Freya. Algiz can be carved in two directions, denoting in each direction the male and the female sex. These two variations have also been used to denote birth and death. In the rune row from Charnay, The Algiz rune is in the same form as the Scandinavian form of Hagal (✳). In this version the two forms of the Algiz rune are connected. Masculine and feminine in one. In Holland this symbol traditionally denoted marriage. The connection to the word "ahl" - sacred place - could have a sexual meaning. In the Scandinavian rune row this is the rune of man - Mannaz - and it is easy to see it as a man with outstretched arms. The rune is then interpreted as a man who is channeling forces from the world of the gods.

ᛋ SOL (s): The rune of the sun. This rune symbolizes the sun in the sky, but also the divine force behind it. In Alvissmal we can read: "Sol it is called among men, "Sunna" among the gods. Sunna is the goddess of the sun. In the Nordic tradition the sun was not a masculine force as in many other cultures. At least in its inner form the sun is a goddess whose nurturing power brings fertility and life on earth. The god Balder also belongs to this rune. He is a sun-god and his death represents the entering of the sun into the realm of the dead. The sun-cult is very old in the north and the motion of the sun, its disappearance and

return, was a central theme in the cult. The sun represents protection and victory. The sun is a fertile force connected to virility, and to the power of Will which can survive even death. The sun is also the eye of the sky. The sun is one of Odin's eyes. The eye that he sacrificed in the well of Mimer (the dreams and the memories; the unconscious) is symbolized by the moon. The Sun rune corresponds to the destructive sun-giant Surt who lives in Muspelheim. He represents the most powerful but also most destructive aspects of the sun.

TYR (t) : Tyr is the ancient war and sky god and the rune that bears his name symbolizes his power. The Tyr rune is above all the rune of struggle and victory. In the Edda poem Sigrdrifumal we can read : "Victory runes you shall know if victory you desire, and carve them on the handle of the sword, some on the hilt and on the pin and two times mention Tyr". Tyr represents courage and justice. Tyr is the law-giving force and represents balance and order (something that is kept by the Reid rune). The shape of the rune reveals both the scale and the spear. The rune also illustrates the pillar that supports the roof of the sky. The Tyr rune symbolizes the part of Yggdrasil that is above earth, like the Irminsul of the Saxons. Tyr is the rune of bravery and self-sacrifice. He places his hand in the mouth of the Fenriz-wolf as a security when the gods are placing it in chains. The wolf bites his hand off when the chains are placed on him. The Tyr rune brings victory but a victory that includes self-sacrifice. The rune is masculine and phallic. It is often viewed as the rune of man rune while the following is the rune of women.

BJARKA (b): The Birch rune. The name of this rune means "Birch" or "Birch branch". The shape of this rune has been interpreted as two female breasts or as a pregnant woman in profile. The rune represents fertility and childbirth. In old fertility rites young men chased the young women and whipped them with Birch branches. This ceremony took place in the spring. The female soul was believed to be connected to the Birch and it was commonly believed that the female soul inhabited the Birch after death. The Birch represents the flow

of life from both birth and death. The Birch is also connected to witchcraft and the sejd trance. The bristle on the witch's broom was traditionally made from Birch. The Birch is a typically Nordic tree. The Birch was the first tree to return after the latest ice age and have symbolized rebirth and new creation. The goddesses Frigg and Freya are connected to the Birch.

EH (e): This rune is called the Horse rune. The word "Eh" means horse and the most common interpretation of this rune is partnership, friendship and co-operation. The rune has been used in marriages and partnership ceremonies. The rune has also a more occult significance. It is rune number 18 in the Uthark and 18 is the number of Odin (2x9, Odin knows 18 power-songs, magic connected to Odin is constructed on the number 9 and 18). The rune is thus connected to Odin. The horse is also connected to Odin. Odin's eight-legged horse Sleipner carries him between the worlds. The word "Yggdrasil" means "Odin's Steed" and is the axis between the worlds used by the magicians when traveling between them. The horse rune is connected to journeys between the worlds. It is also connected to the Reid rune. The horse is viewed as the most magical animal in the Nordic tradition. A head of a horse frightened the "landvettirs" which was believed to cause bad luck. But at the same time the head of a horse was placed over a well to protect it. The horse is intimately connected to death. At the winter solstice Odin rides with the legions of the dead in the feared "wild hunt". The horse also belongs to Hel. The underworld consists of another nine worlds, apart from the nine worlds of the Yggdrasil. These worlds are called "Heldrasil" which can be interpreted as "Hel's Horse" , the dark female and underworld counterpart of the Yggdrasil. Among certain farmers, "Hel's Horse" is a mystical conception related to death and its kingdoms. The Eh rune is also connected to karma and justice. In many myths a mans good and bad deeds are placed on a scale in the underworld. This rune can illustrate a scale. The shape of the rune has also been interpreted as illustrating a horse, but sometimes as two people shaking hands. The meaning of partnership is then revealed. The Eh rune is connected to the totem of man, the fylgja. This

animal helps us to travel between the worlds and is perhaps our greatest guide through life and death. It is said that "Marr er manns fylgja" - The horse is mans fylgja.

MANNAZ (m):The rune of man follows the Horse rune; Mannaz represents man in balance. The shape of this rune is sometimes interpreted as a man and a woman holding each other. The X-shape can also be found in the rune, illustrating the communication between the worlds above and below, and the four directions. This rune belongs to the world of man. The rune is number 19 in the Uthark. The number 19 unites the seven planets and the 12 star-signs of the Zodiac. It is a very old conception that man is created by forces from these planets and stars. The rune "Manna" in the Gothic Futhark has the double meaning of tree and man. In the Nordic spirituality man was connected to the trees. This is also evident from the Scandinavian rune row, where the rune of man has a shape similar to a tree (identical to the Elk rune).

LAGU (l) : This is the rune of water. The name of the rune can be found in many words; the Swedish "lag", "lagun", the English "lake", "lagoon" etc. Lagu does not only denote water but also the word fluid (SW: vätska). Lagu is the basic law (SW: lag) of life. The rune represents the original waters of Nifelheim that is the prerequisite of all life. Lagu, like water is closely connected to the moon. Water moves in phases of ebb and flow, through the phases of the moon. The cycle of the moon also reflects the menstruation and Lagu is the rune of blood and body fluids. Lagu corresponds to witchcraft and magic and in the names "logr" or "laukar", it signifies "witch-craft". The rune is connected to dreams which are influenced by the moon and the balance of the body-fluids. Lagu is also connected to the goddess Nerthus and the gods Njord and Ægir and his wife Ran and their nine daughters. The rune is number twenty in the Uthark. Twenty is often connected to water and the moon. Sigurd Agrell has a theory about how the number twenty is found in the Nordic tradition by pointing out Ægir, Ran and their nine daughters: "If we would dare to suppose that they also had as many sons - such a symmetry

is common in mythology - , the sea in Nordic folklore would have been represented by 20 water demons (2 + 9 + 9)". In the Nordic tradition a ceremonial pouring of water on people was common - vatni ausa; one poured water as a sort of baptizing.

ING (ng): The Ing rune represents the masculine power of reproduction. The rune illustrates a sperm or a phallus. The word Ing means sperm or seed (SW:frö). Ing is a god corresponding to Frö or Frey. This god is the husband of Freya and a god of fertility. Ing might also have been the male counterpart to Nerthus, the goddess of earth. The mythical Swedish Royal Dynasty the "Ynglingarna" could supposedly trace their family lines back to the god Yng or Ing. The Swedish word "Yngling" means a young virile man. The rune is connected to the spring. From a magical perspective the rune contains the potential. The rune is the seed of what is to come.

ODAL (o): Odal denotes "real property/estate" or "inheritance". The Odalman is an independent landowning man. Odal also denotes "noble" (SW: ädel) which alludes to the Odalman who according to tradition has the power to claim life, power and land. The word "nobility" can also be traced to Odal (SW: adel). The Odal rune is also connected to the family and ones historical right. The Odal rune is the rune of the clan, the relatives and the nation. It represents a limit and protection. The rune illustrates a wall with a large opening. It is also the Ing rune standing firmly with two legs on the ground. The magical aspect of the rune is to find ones roots and ones anchorage in history. The oldest forms of spirituality were ancestor cults in which man lived in a direct relation with his ancestors and the places they inhabited. The ancestors often lived on in magical objects, especially trees, that were connected to their souls. The tree-cult and the ancestor-cult have always been intimately connected. The Odal rune represents a person's roots and historical foundation. It is a rune of protection and it can be found on old houses. The place of the rune in the row is not obvious. Sometimes it is placed after "Dagaz", as in the Kylverstone. But on many findings it is placed before "Dagaz".

DAGAZ (d): This is the Day rune. It denotes rather the daylight itself than the day as a period of time, although it illustrates the time between dawn and dusk. Dagaz represents illumination, clarity and awakening. It is used as protection against witchcraft and was carved on doors and windows. Dagaz is the rune of culmination. It represents zenith and the climax. The Jara rune represents the year-cycle when it turns at the midwinter solstice, and Dagaz represents the midsummer solstice. Dagaz is the highest point of a cycle and the beginning of a new. It is similar to the butterfly and represents the step out of the chrysalis and into a new reality.

FEH (f): The name of this rune denotes "cattle" or "livestock". The cattle have been equivalent to wealth and the rune is often called the wealth rune. In the Elder Futhark this is the first rune, which is the best argument of the Uthark-theory. It seems reasonable that the primeval animal "Ur" comes first and the tame cattle "Feh" last. The name "Wealth rune" also denotes that this rune is connected to rewards and riches that one has gathered. This would logically be the last step in a process. According to the Uthark this rune represents the completion of a process and the following reward. The enormous primordial and chaotic powers of the Ur rune that the rune row begins with have been tamed and are under the magician's control at the Feh rune. The relationship between the first and the last rune reveals how they are like two sides of a coin. They represent the extremes that easily will pass over into each other. Since the Nordic spirituality is not created around the perspective of linear time, but cyclic, a new cycle begins after Feh, starting with a new Ur rune.

The Uthark versus the Futhark

The Uthark-theory is controversial. Many runologists doubt that it has any real significance. But there is also a number of serious runologists who believe that it might be possible. It all depends on how we look upon the runes. The Uthark-theory is not mainly dependent on findings, but on its correspondence to Nordic mythology, numerology and magical tradition. The most important finding that to a certain extent has supported the Uthark theory is the Kylverstone from Gotland, which is the oldest finding that reveals a complete rune row. It begins with a vertical line before the Ur rune (some scholars believe the line is a broken or incomplete Feh rune). The last rune is a classical cryptic rune, or a sign that could be a version of the rune Feh. This oldest finding of a complete rune row, that was found in a tomb, could very well reveal the original rune row. It is also known from other findings that this very code that turns the Uthark to a Futhark was common among rune magicians. Often the runes were moved one step to conceal the meaning of what was written. If we were to move the runes one step back in the rune row, the name "Hel" would become WBM. The complete rune row could be arranged in this manner to avoid uninitiates grasping its true secrets. In the story of Egil Skallagrimsson it is told how the rune magician Egil arrives at a farm where the daughter in the family is seriously ill. Egil finds a piece of whalebone carved with runes under her bed. It is a young man from the area who has tried to carve love runes to win her love. But he has carved the wrong runes and instead made her ill. Egil removes the young mans runes and carves new runes to heal the girl. Afterwards Egil states that : "A farm boy shall not carve runes, if he places them not right: many men may be misled by marks upon dark staves". Thus we are taught

there is a great risk that those uninitiated in the secrets of the runes will arrange them erroneously.

It is interesting from a runemagical perspective that the oldest finding of a rune row is from Gotland and that it could be depicting an Uthark. The runes might have its origin in the tradition of the Goths, whose tribal name comes from the god Gaut (Gotos, Got, Gut). Gaut means god and is one of Odin's names. Odin is the one who is initiated in the runic mysteries and it is from him man can get the knowledge about the runes. The Goths are Odin's people and it is often claimed that Gotland is the native country of the Goths.

The Futhark is sometimes viewed as an outer exoteric form of the rune row. It begins with the tamed - Feh - which is followed by the wild in the form of "Ur". The Uthark is a darker form of the rune row which in accordance with the Nordic myths begins in the beginning with the forces of chaos.

From a magical perspective the rune row is not only a linear row but should be arranged in a circle. In this circle of 24 runes the runes are also representing the 24 hours of the day and the twelve signs of the zodiac. Placed in a circle we can see how the rune row can be read both as a Futhark and an Uthark.

Not only the separate runes, but the whole rune row was used in magical operations. The rune row itself contains magical power and it summarizes all the magical qualities of the separate runes. Thus it is not unlikely that the widespread magical formula ALU can confirm the Uthark-theory. If the runes in the formula are added numerologically (A = 3, L = 20, U = 1) it makes 24 - the number of the complete rune row. The ALU formula includes the complete rune row and is a synthesis of the powers of the 24 runes. The ALU formula is interesting also from the perspective of the Futhark, where its number becomes 27, which is 3x9. To repeat a magical number like nine three times is believed to increase its power. The term "alu" means holy and is related to the word "ale" (SW:öl) and denoted divine inspiration and magical power.

The Elder Futhark and the Uthark are divided into three ættir. In the Futhark the three runes in the beginning of each ætt illustrate the ætt: Frey (Feh), Hagal and Tyr. In the Uthark these runes are last

in each ætt. There are three ways to divide the ættir in the Uthark :

1). One can begin from the end, with Frey (Feh), Tyr and Hagal. But this will complicate the logic of the Uthark disposition.

2). The last rune of every ætt can illustrate the ætt. It will be Hagal's, Tyr's and last Frey's ætt.

3). One names the ættir after other runes and powers, like in the Futhark using the first runes of each ætt. We will then have the ættir of Ur, Naud and Bjarka. This indicates three female ættir: Ur/Audhumbla, Naud/The Norns and Bjarka/Frigg or Berchta. These ættir would represent creation, time/death and finally resurrection.

Chapter 3

RUNOSOPHY

A knowledge about the nine worlds described in the old Norse tradition is as important as the knowledge of the runes. The nine worlds are not only the abode of mythological characters, but also represent aspects of existence and human consciousness. The nine worlds are linked by the world tree Yggdrasil which is the axis in the middle of the universe. They can be divided into three triads where the first three will represent the shamanic "upper world", or mans super consciousness. The three following represent the "middleworld" and the conscious, while the three lowest represent the "underworld", the unconscious and unknown.

MUSPELHEIM: The realm of heat and fire. One of the two extreme poles of the cosmic forces. The word "muspilli" means "worldfire" and this is the abode of the powers that initiate Ragnarök. Muspelheim is in the south. It is ruled by the fire-giant Surt who commands his legions, the sons of Muspel. Surt carries a flaming sword. Muspelheim represents the expanding and convex force in the universe. Muspelheim is plasma and pure energy.

ASGÅRD: The world of the Gods. Asgård is the home of the Æsir and also the Vanir. Around Asgård there is a wall that was built by a giant. The Æsir are gods of war, and the builders of the universe. They are keepers of the order in the cosmos. They are at war with the giants, but there is also some co-operation between the two. Asgård is the centre of "önd", the spirit and breath which brings life.

VANAHEIM: The world of the Vanir. The Vanir is the other group of gods and it is often thought that they might belong to an older and more powerful race than the Æsir. Odin was taught the secrets of magic by the Vanir goddess Freya. The Vanir is con-

nected to fertility and water. They are also the gods of witchcraft. Vanaheim is the realm of sexuality. The Vanir god Frey is depicted with a huge erected phallus. Frey and Freya are united in a hieros gamos, a sacral sexual intercourse and wedding. The ”fylgja” belongs to Vanaheim. The fylgja is the totem animal and female guardian spirit guiding man. The fylgja is connected to the Dises and the main Dis is Vanadis, an epithet of Freya.

LJUSALFHEIM: The light-elves are the heavenly elves. They are related to the Vanir who are called elves in the Lokasenna. The god Frey lives in Alfheim. Frey was given Alfheim by the Æsir. The elves had a greater cult around them than what is revealed through the myths. The elves are spirits of nature and the light-elves are related to the fairies. The sun is called ”alvglans”. Ljusalfheim is like Vanaheim connected to sexuality and fertility, but also to intellect and clearness of mind. Ljusalfheim is the seat of the ”hugr”, the thought.

MIDGÅRD: The world of man. The material world and physical nature. In man, Midgard represents the physical body, called ”lik”. It was not created by the gods. The first two humans were created from two pieces of wood. Through Voden, Vile and Ve the physical body/pieces of wood was given life and spirit, understanding and sensory perception and also emotions and other senses.

SVARTALFHEIM: The black-elves are the elves of the underworld. They are craftsmen and goldsmiths and create the finest treasures and weapons. They are related to the dwarves. The black-elves are like the light-elves spirits of nature. They are living under rocks, in mountains and under the ground. They represent the shaping force. That which brings forth the shape, the ”Hamr”. If light-elves are the intellect, the black-elves represent the feelings.

JOTUNHEIM: The realm of the giants. Compared to the gods the giants belong to an ancient race. They represent chaos, the forces that lie outside the cosmos of order, created by the gods. The castle of Utgård lies in Jotunheim. The giants are extremely wise and all memories from ancient times are kept among them. The well of Mimer can be found in Jotunheim and Odin sacrifices his eye in it to gain access to the secrets of Mimer - ”minni”. Jotunheim represents ”minni”, the magical memory. The well of Mimer corresponds to

what in occultism is sometimes called the "akashic records", the place or level where all things from all times are kept.

HELHEIM: Helheim or Hel is the world of the dead. It is the most misunderstood and misinterpreted of the Nordic worlds. The true meaning of Hel has been shrouded in ignorance. This is hardly surprising since the name "Hel" itself means among other things "the hidden one" or "the shrouded one". Helheim is the world of nothingness and includes the nine worlds that are dark counterparts to the nine world of the Yggdrasil. Hel has been interpreted as the Nordic hell where all who have died in bed (by disease) will end up. Hel is the world of hidden mysteries. It is not just death, but also that which forebodes life. Hel is like the earth, giving life through decay and death. Hel is a dark goddess, a double-nature of life and death. This is reflected in her face which is half blue and half flesh-like , or in other interpretations white and black. The road to Hel leads deep down into the underworld through dark valleys and over the river Gjöll. Helheim is guarded by the young maiden Modgunn who will only let one pass after one has revealed name and descent. Helheim is also guarded by the terrible hellhound Garm. The road to Hel takes nine days and leads through innumerable difficulties. This corresponds to Odin's nine days in the Yggdrasil. Hel is the realm of death where the secrets of existence - the runes - are hidden. Hel is completion. Hel is not a place for suffering but a place where the complete knowledge can be found, the hidden or shrouded knowledge. Hel is the seat of the soul-double called "Vård".

NIFELHEIM: The realm of winter and ice. This is the deepest of all worlds and lies under Hel. Nifelheim is the other extreme of the universe and is an opposite to Muspelheim. This is the astringent and concave principle. Nifelheim is the utmost heaviness and is connected to black holes. Hel, the goddess of death was thrown down into the realm of ice and built her world above it. Nifelheim is sometimes called Nifelhel and is thought to be a darker and more frightening place than the realm of death. This is where criminals will arrive after death. From the centre of Nifelheim the spring Vergelmer flows into eleven rivers. At Vergelmer the dragon Nidhögg lives. Nidhögg represents the anti-force of the universe, the destructive principle embodied. But one must not forget that it was from the

waters of Nifelheim that all life once came.

Nine worlds and twenty-four paths

The most important symbol in western occultism which illustrates the structure of the universe is the "Tree of Life" of the Qabalah. It consists of ten worlds representing ten levels of manifestation and creation, from the first idea to the completion. The ten worlds are linked by twenty-two paths corresponding to the twenty-two trumps of the Tarot and the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The Nordic spirituality also has a symbol for the universe, but it is constructed according to another system. Instead of viewing creation as flowing from one single source, the Nordic myth of creation begins with a meeting of two polar forces. In the created worlds there are both life and death, while the Qabalah focuses on a dualism between good and evil, where death and "evil" is not included in the structures of creation. Instead a gigantic shadow of the Tree of Life is created, called the "Tree of Death". This is to a certain extent represented by Heldrasil and the nine underworlds of Hel in the Nordic spirituality. But at the same time there is no such extreme dualism in the Nordic system. Death and life is interwoven to a unity. The gods and their enemies, the giants, often co-operate.

The Nordic world tree Yggdrasil could be compared to the Tree of Life. The Yggdrasil can be drawn in a manner that is slightly reminiscent of the qabalistic Tree of Life, but which contains twenty-four paths representing the runes. The runes are aspects of the web called "the web of Urd (Wyrd)" that connects the universe and the different worlds. The paths of the world tree are like the rune row constructed according to three ættir of eight runes each.

There are of course variations in the arrangement, the meaning of the ættir and their name, as well as the position of the worlds and the paths. We are here using a method that is based on the Uthark focusing on the idea that everything was created through the meeting between two primordial polar forces. There are three ættir: The Ur-ætt which represents the flow of the forces from the realms of fire and ice and how this is the foundation to the other

worlds. The Naud-ætt represents time and the wheel of destiny. These are the cosmic forces which by necessity move outside the control of man. Through the initiation in the secrets of the runes, man will gain control over the wheel of destiny and the worlds outside Midgård. The Bjarka-ætt belongs to the world of man, his life and soul-qualities. This is also connected to initiation and rebirth. The two primal realms of Thurs are here isolated from man, who creates a complete soul (the Lik, Vård, Önd, Hamr, Fylgja, Hugr and Minni are here connected) that exists between the two extremes, without being torn in either direction.

The Uthark and the 24 paths

The Ur-ætt

1. UR. Nifel - Hel : Vergelmer and the primordial river that gave rise to the universe.

2. THURS. Nifel - Jotun : The rimthurses are created through Nifelheim and inhabits Jotunheim.

3. AS. Muspel - As : The gods are created from the heat. Divine dynamic energy.

4. REID. Nifel - Svartalf : From the primordial giant the dwarves are created. The four cardinal dwarves supports the world.

5. KEN. Muspel - Ljusalf : A fire-spark from Muspel becomes the light in Ljusalvheim and gives rise to the sun, Alvglans.

6. GIFU. As - Mid : The gods give man the qualities of life and soul as a gift. Man responds through sacrificial gifts in return.

7. WYNJA. Muspel - Vana : Light and energy. Joy and fertility. The rune of the Vanir.

8. HAGAL. Mid - Hel : Death and the hidden. Mans initiation in the secrets of the runes.

The Naud-ætt

9. NAUD. Hel - Jotun : Urd and Mimer. Destiny and memory. Contains the secrets of the runes.

10. IS. Jotun-Svartalf. Layers of ice in the underworld which crosses mans path into Hel.

11. JERA. As - Vana : A meeting between the Æsir and the Vanir. Odin and Freya.

12. PERTRA. Jotun-Ljusalf. The well of Mimer (or Urd) which unites memory and thought.

13. EIHWAZ. Svartalf-Vana. A phallic principle which unites the centre of basic instincts with the centre of fertility.

14. ALGIZ. Ljusalf - As : Nature as a divine sanctuary. The fairies home in the trees.

15. SOL. Ljusalf-Vana. Alvglans: the sun, as the solar nature of the god Frey, as ruler of both Vanaheim and Ljusalfheim.

16. TYR. Hel - Svartalf. The wolf of hell is fettered by the chain Gleipner, made by the dwarves.

The Bjarka ætt

17. BJARKA. Mid - Vana. Rebirth. The fertile power of the Vanir.

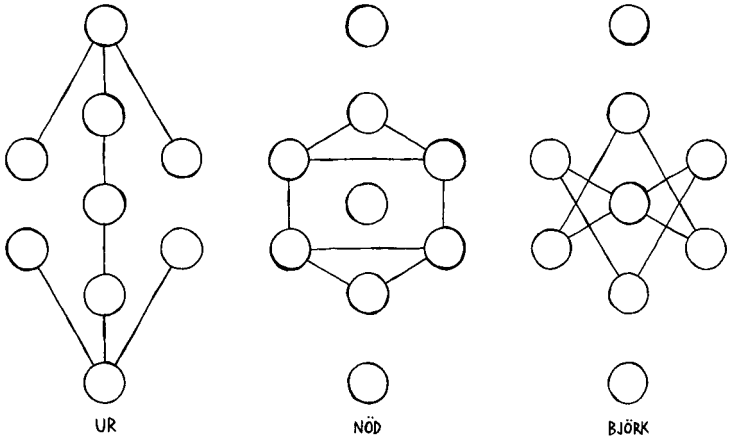
18. EH. As - Jotun. Co-operation between the giants and the Æsir. The birth of Sleipner. Journeys by horse to Utgård.

19. MANNAZ . Mid - Svartalf. The shape of man is created.

20. LAGU. Hel - Svartalf. The water of the underworld arises in the spring.

21. ING. Vana - Hel. The seed fertilizing the underworld.

22. ODAl. Mid - Jotun. The world of man is demarcated and protected from the forces of chaos.



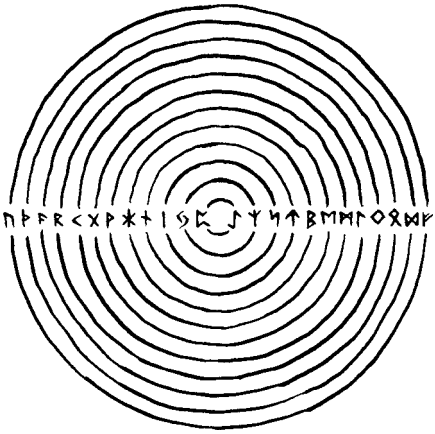
23. DAGAZ. Mid - Ljusalf. The intellect of man. Illumination. Clarity.

24. FEH. As - Svartalf. The gods treasures, obtained from the dwarves of the underworld.

The Multidimensional Uthark

The runes are not only to be understood from a linear perspective where Ur is the first and Feh the last. The runes are symbolizing multi-dimensional principles. By looking at different arrangements of the runes one will discover hidden meanings.

One can place the 24 runes in twelve circles inside each other. The first and last rune is on each side of the outer circle. The runes from the two ends of the Uthark will then appear in pairs on each side of the circle. The inner circle consists of the middle rune pair Pertro and Eihwaz. Thus we have reached twelve rune-pairs. The numbers 12 and 24 are important numbers in many ways. They represent the zodiac, the day, the months etc. The rune-pairs create complementary and polar forces. Some are obvious.



UR - FEH (1 - 24) : the primordial ox/the tame ox, nature/culture.

THURS - DAGAZ (2 - 23) : night/day.

AS - ODAL (3 - 22) : Asgård/Midgård, heaven/earth.

REID - ING (4 - 21): Thor/Frey, structure/nature.

KEN - LAGU (5 - 20) : fire/water.

GIFU/MANNAZ (6 - 19) : giver/receiver.

WYNJA - EH (7 - 18) : harmony/co-operation

HAGAL - BJARKA (8 - 17) : Hel/Frigg, death/life.

NAUD - TYR (9 - 16) : Odin / Tyr, descent/preservation.

IS - SOL (10 - 15) : winter/summer, Nifel/Muspel.

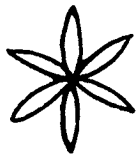
JARA - ALGIZ (11 - 14) : field/forest.

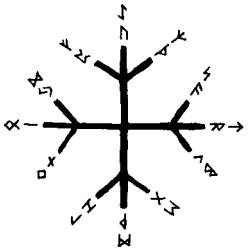
PERTRO - EIHWAZ (12 - 13) : the womb/ the phallus.

It is also possible to create triple rune arrangements, or groups of four, six and eight. This will create powerful sigils but also new groups of runes that can reveal even more inherent meanings. The most common runic sigil in northern magic is constructed around the Scandinavian Hagal rune (ᚼ). The six spokes are filled with runes

or flower-like patterns. A very powerful sigil is the "Ægishjelmur". On its twelve arms the 24 runes can be placed in two rounds. This will create even more rune-pairs with interesting meanings.

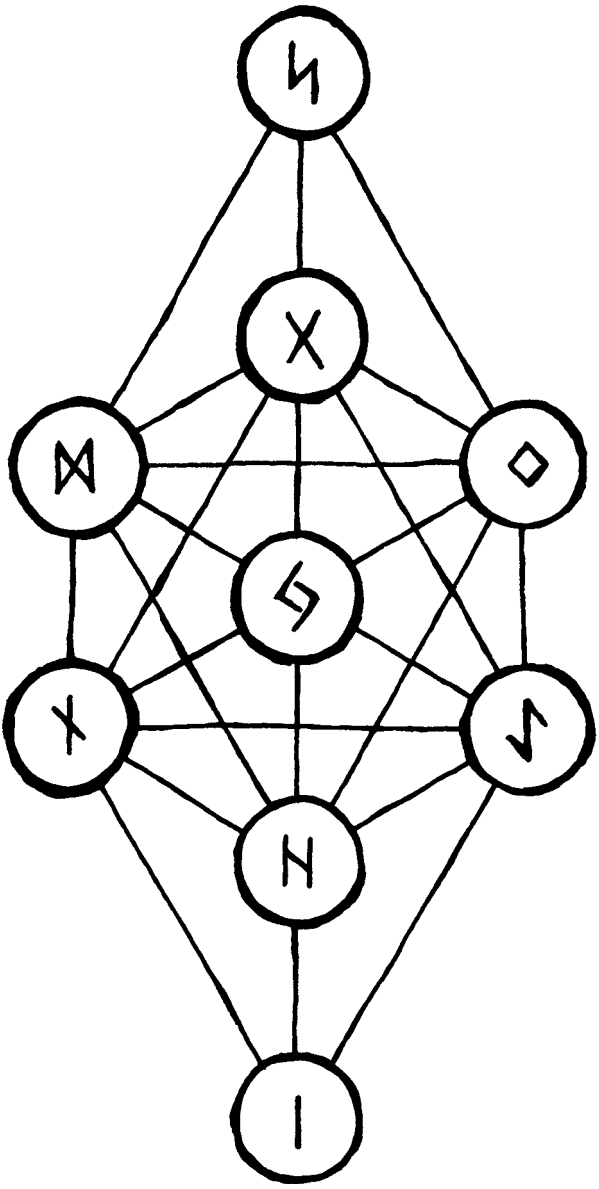
There are three main methods for exploring the significance of the runes. Through their 1) name, 2) shape and 3) position. All of these three aspects will contribute to the probability of the Uthark theory. The Ur rune can be used as an example. The name "Ur" indicates a connection to the "origin" (SW: ursprung), "the first" etc. If one bears this in mind, the placement of the Ur rune as number one in the row seems logical. The shape of the Ur rune will be even more striking if we turn it upside-down, then bearing resemblance to our modern letter "u". The rune will thus symbolize the chalice or the





womb from which everything is born. In mythology this is the Ginnungagap. The shape of the rune also represents the two horns of the primordial cow or ox, and it is known that the first being besides Ymer was Audhumbla, the primordial cow. Thus it is almost obvious that a rune called "Ur", corresponding to mythological descriptions of the primordial state, is the first rune in the row.

The name of the rune is what principally denotes its significance. What the shape reveals is more or less evident in the different runes. A good exercise to learn the meanings of the runes is to draw or carve them many times and meditate on what they seem to represent. The significance of many runes will appear rather distinctly. The Ice rune resembles an icicle, the Ing rune a seed. It is not too far-fetched to see the Bjarka rune, which is the feminine rune, also illustrating a female body. The Tyr rune has a phallic shape, but also illustrates the function of Tyr as the god of order. Tyr is the pillar



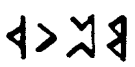
upholding the roof of heaven. The Algiz rune which signifies elk, tree and human, illustrates all of these three meanings (the horns of the elk, the tree with stem and branches and a man with outstretched arms). The positions of the runes are connected to their numerology. The Ur rune is the first rune and denotes number one. The Thurs rune is number two. The number two is associated with the powers of darkness. It is possible to read many connections between the position of the rune and its meaning through the rune row. Sigurd Agrell uses mainly numerological arguments to support his theory.

There is another way to see significations in certain runes, which is evident when the runes are used for divination. Some runes will then appear upside-down, or they will be reversed. The runes will then behave in four different ways. Some runes are symmetrical and can appear upside-down, when they do, the meaning will be inverted. The significance also becomes inverted:

UR, ALGIZ, TYR, EH, MANNAZ, ODAL.

Some runes are unsymmetrical, and do not change when inverted but are reversed. The meaning is thus reversed but not inverted:

THURS, KEN, PERTRO, BJARKA.

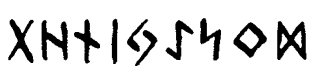


The third group can be both reversed and inverted. Their meaning will then become both inverted and reversed:

AS, REID, WYNJA, LAGU, FEH .

The fourth group is of greatest importance. They can neither be reversed nor inverted. Their meaning is never changed. Significantly they are also nine in number:

GIFU, HAGAL, NAUD, IS, JARA, EIHWAZ, SOL, ING, DAGAZ .



In the chapter that deals with runes and divination we will take an in-depth look on the runes in divination. The difference between the runes appearing inverted and those reversed can at first be difficult to understand. Only through experimentation can one reach a true understanding. We will now limit ourselves to a deeper study of the nine unchangeable runes. They are also denoting the nine worlds.

MUSPELHEIM: The rune that represents the world of fire is SOL. It is shaped like a flash of lightning and indicates the power and dynamics of Muspelheim. In its primal and destructive form, the rune corresponds to the giant Surt. The rune is like the flash also a picture of the flaming sword of Surt.

ASGÅRD: Generally the As rune is associated with Asgård, but also GIFU belongs here. The Gift rune represents the meetings between gods and men, the gifts we are given from the gods and the fact that Asgård is often described as the centre of the universe.

VANAHEIM: The obvious rune here is ING. This rune is related to fertility and the main god of the Vanir is Frey, who is also named Ing.

LJUSALFHEIM: This is the world of light and clarity and the rune that belongs here is DAGAZ. This is the world of the fairies, which is indicated by the butterfly or fairy-like form of the rune.

MIDGÅRD: The world of man is characterized by cycles and the return of the seasons. The rune that belongs to Midgård is JARA, the rune of the seasons.

SVARTALFHEIM: The elves from the underworld are harsh

beings, but very important in magic. They are living in the tunnels under the roots of the Yggdrasil and the rune that belongs here is EIHWAZ.

JOTUNHEIM: The world of the giants is a world of ancient extreme forces that resists the cosmos that the gods have created. They are forces of chaos and necessity, but also wisdom. In their world the well of Mimer can be found. The well of Mimer is related to the well of Urd. The ninth rune, NAUD corresponds to Jotunheim.

HELHEIM: Hel, the goddess of death and her realm contains the secrets of the runes which are inherent in the hail crystal. The rune HAGAL belongs to the world of Hel.

NIFELHEIM: The Ice rune belongs to Nifelheim.

The Nordic spirituality is not dualistic in the sense of good and evil standing opposed in an unsolvable conflict. The old wise of the Nordic tradition were probably more nuanced in their views and realized that there were no absolute good or absolute evil. Often the gods are more treacherous and immoral than the giants. Darkness and light are not connected to good and evil. Both darkness and light exists in a balance like night and day. Every rune has a dark and a light side. But one could create a group of dark runes, a group of light runes and a group of neutral runes from the rune row. We will then have three groups of eight runes.

The dark runes are called ”rökkr runes” or ”myrk runes”: To this category belong:

UR, THURS, HAGAL, NAUD, IS, PERTRO, EIHWAZ, LAGU

The light so called ”heid runes” are:

AS, KEN, GIFU, WYNJA, SOL, TYR, DAGAZ, FEH

The remaining are neutral:

REID, JARA, ALGIZ, BJARKA, EH, MANNAZ, ING, ODAL

But every rune has a dark and a light side. This must, however, not be interpreted in an ethical way. The dark runes do not have to be equivalent to evil. The dark runes are connected to functions

related to death and the underworld, but also to the hidden wisdom of the runes. Some aspects of the dark runes are connected to the womb and the primordial force that the world is born from. The light runes can cause stagnation and exhaustion. The world is as taught by the Nordic spirituality, a balance between two extremes.

The Nordic colour scale

Colours can be experienced and categorized in different epochs and traditions. In the Edda of Snorre the rainbow is described as having three colours, while other sources describes it as having seven. The Nordic colour-scale can be divided into nine colours which correspond to the nine worlds. The nine colours are the four primary colours (red, yellow, green and blue), black and white, gold and silver and the colour of the earth - brown. They are connected to the nine worlds in the following way:

Brown: Midgård. The colour of earth and soil. Mother Earth, the one who gives life and takes it back through decay. Nourishment and stability.

Green: Vanaheim. The colour of fertile and flowering nature.

Yellow: Ljusalfheim. The colour of the intellect. Lightness, clarity and communication.

Red: Svartalfheim. Power, emotions and instincts. Magical force. Potency. Iron and smithery.

Blue: Jotunheim. The realm of the giants at the edge of the sea. Water and the well of Mimer. Memories and dreams of the past.

Gold: Asgård. Divine power, ”önd”. Glory and power. The sun and its beams.

Silver: Helheim. The moon and its light. The light in the night. The power of witchcraft and death. Dreams and hallucinations.

Black: Nifelheim. The absolute concentration of force. The black hole. Death and utter coldness. Bearer of life and the hidden light. The all-potential.

White: Muspelheim. Pure energy. Total unlimited force, perpetually radiating and expanding.

Chapter 4

MAN AND HIS SOULS

The Nordic spirituality does not include a simplified separation between body and soul. The limits between the physical and the spiritual are vague and when studying the myths one can get the impression that there were no such limits at all in the old days in the north. In the Nordic description of man there are many aspects of the soul. Man consists of nine soul-forms. Seven of these are connected to the seven worlds of the Yggdrasil which are the actual creation if we do not count the two primal realms of the Thurses. Muspelheim and Nifelheim represent two extremes that can not include in themselves any of these principles of the soul. The world and its inhabitants arise in the Ginnungagap between these two poles. Thus the two realms of the Thurses must be removed when discussing the contents of creation itself. This is illustrated in the Ur-ætt where the worlds between Muspelheim and Nifelheim are connected and united. This unity is man and the seven worlds represent seven main aspects in man.

Man was not created by the gods. Man already existed in the form of two trees - Ask and Embla (Elm). These two logs were found on a shore by the three gods Odin, Höner and Lodur (Loke). The shore indicates that they had been cast out of the great primordial sea from which according to the myths everything originates. In the Völuspa it is written:

”From the circle three Æsir appeared, powerful, benign, down to the house, found on dry land scarcely able, Ask and Embla, without destiny”.

”Breath they had naught, neither Hug they owned, no blood, no manners, no godlikeness. Spirit and Hug, Odin and Höner gave, Lodur gave manners and godlikeness”.

From Odin, Ask and Embla are given life and breath. From Höner they are given understanding and movement. Lodur gives them senses and emotions. These three gifts and the physical form of the logs, represent the division in four worlds or levels common in western occultism.

The spiritual level. The gift of Odin: Life and breath.

The mental level. The gift of Höner: Understanding and movement.

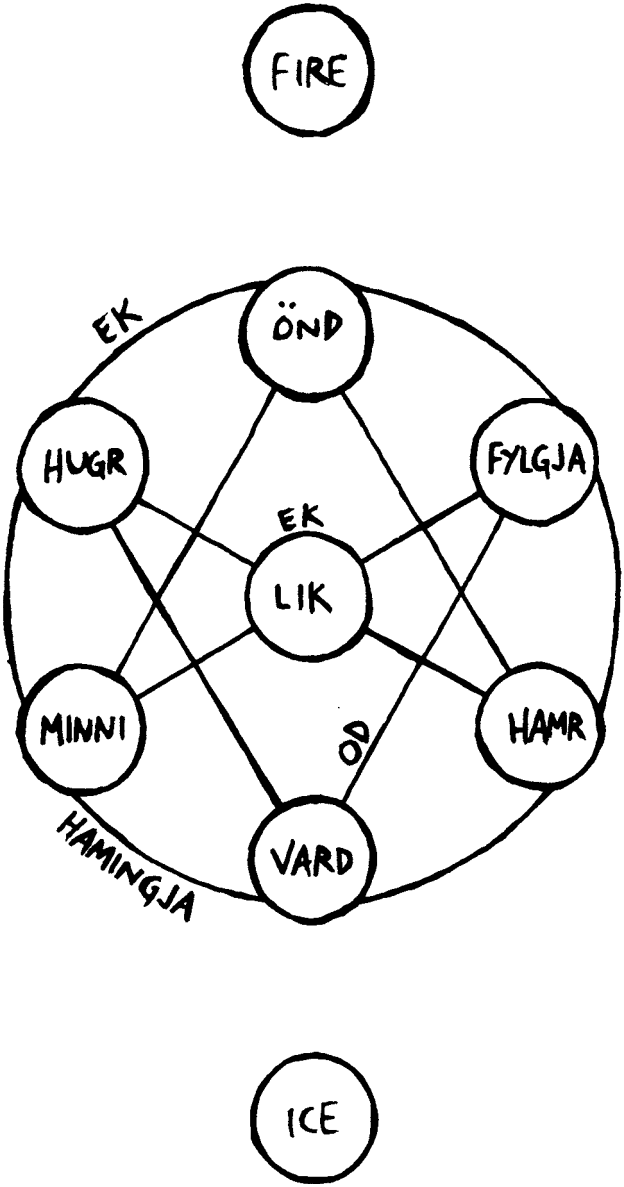
The astral level. The gift of Lodur: Senses and emotions.

The physical level. The Logs Ask and Embla.

In a more detailed arrangement of the different aspects of man, the seven forms connected to the seven worlds between the realms of fire and ice can be included:

1. LIK. The physical body. Matter. The logs Ask and Embla. The skeleton and framework of the other aspects. In the old Norse language the physical body was called "lik". This term is kept in Swedish and denotes a dead body, a body without the other aspects. The Lik is connected to Midgård.

2. ÖND. The spirit, the breath. The breaths and our spirit are closely connected. We have been given life through the breathing of nature : the wind. The god of the wind is Odin. Önd is the essence of life. Önd is the spark or the core. All life has a core of önd. There is önd in nature and the stronger the önd is, the more powerful a place is. Stone circles, certain trees and other formations in nature as well as people and animals, can have a higher amount of önd. There are three directions of önd: heavenly önd, earthly önd and the önd of the underworld. Heavenly önd flows from above and down, earthly önd flows horizontally and the önd of the underworld flows upwards. Strong power places are a meeting point between these directions of önd-force. Among humans the önd moves in the same way. The centre is in the chest besides the heart or slightly below the navel. Both points can be connected to the Gifu rune.


FIRE
ÖND
EK
HUGR
FYLGJA
EK
LIK
MINNI
OD
HAMR
VARD
HAMINGJA
ICE

Önd represents the Indian term ”prana” and ”atman”. The word is etymologically related to ”atman”, the spirit and the divine spark. Önd is connected to Asgård.

3. HUGR: The ”hugen” or ”hugr” is the understanding, the thought and the conscious qualities of the soul. The ”hugr” is one half of the couple hugr and minni, thought and memory. These are manifested in Odin as the two ravens Hugin and Munin. The hugr is the analytical thinking and it represents the functions of the left cerebral hemisphere. The hugr can make long journeys, similar to the journeys of the mind and the intellect. The hugr flies with ease, is characterized by clarity and belongs to Ljusalfheim.

4. MINNI: Minni is a very important aspect of the soul. Minni is the memory, but in a much deeper sense. It represents the ability to travel in the reservoir of deeds from the past and memories from ancient days. This magical memory is symbolized by the well of Mimer, which represents the akashic records. Odin sacrifices one of his eyes in the well to gain the ancient wisdom. This wisdom belongs to the giants and the well of Mimer can be found in Jotunheim. Mimer is personifying the minni which belongs to Jotunheim. Minni is the associative thinking that represents the functions of the right cerebral hemisphere. Hugin and the hugr flies into the future. Minni and Munin flies into the past, The knowledge about the past is more important than the thought about the future. In the Grimnismal Odin says:

”Hugin and Munin fly over the world every day; I fear for Hugin, lest he not return, but even more I fear for Munin”

5. FYLGJA: Everybody has a guardian spirit and guide. This is called the ”fylgja” and is closely connected to the Vanir and Vanaheim. The fylgja appears in three forms: as an animal, as a person of the opposite sex and in an abstract form. Individuals have a fylgja as well as families, tribes and the whole of humanity. It is said that the horse is the fylgja of man. Totem-animals are inherited fylgjas. A clairvoyant person can see the fylgja in other persons. It is often reflected in the appearance of a person. The abstract form of fylgja resembles a glowing, geometrical and ever-changing bundle of energy. The fylgja follows a person through life. It watches over birth

and guides in dreams and through death. A magician makes sure to have good relations to his fylgja and learns how to communicate with it. The conception of the fylgja has lived on in tales and stories about witches and their magical animals.

6. HAMR: The shape of our appearance is controlled by our ”Hamr”, also called ”Hamn” or ”Ham”. The word denotes ”figure” or ”garment”. This principle is what controls the outer shape of all living things. This is the form-giving principle. The Hamr is connected to Svartalfheim since the dwarves and the black-elves are the ones who shape and form things. Powerful magicians can use the hugr to change Hamr, changing appearance and form. During an ecstatic trance or deep-sleep they are releasing their mind or soul and leave the body with its appearance. They will instead take on the form of some animal, usually their fylgja. This is called to change Hamr. This can be so powerful that other people will believe that they are really encountering the animal that the magician has chosen. But according to the myths, if the animal would be hurt, the magician would also be hurt. This is the danger with such magical operations. One encountering a magician in another Hamr usually becomes sleepy and might fall asleep. This indicates that the person is entering the same world of perception as the magician and sees what he is projecting. There are many examples of change of Hamr in the Nordic myths. Odin, Loke and Freya are masters of this art. Freya is the master of Sejd and Hamr-change. Her Hamr is a falcon and occasionally she lets other gods borrow this form. In later folklore, Freya and her devotees have been turned into witches riding on broomsticks. The broomstick is originally the tool that the female magicians used to enter ecstatic trance.

7. VARD: The soul-double of man is called ”Vard” or ”Vård”. Certain people can during their lifetime send away their Vard on journeys to other worlds. For all people, the Vard is disconnected from the body when the physical body dies. The Vard is the same as the ghost or phantom. It belongs to Helheim.

There are two more aspects of the soul that are very important in Nordic spirituality, but that can not be directly linked to any of the worlds. Together with the seven above they create the nine main aspects of man.

8. OD: The word ”Od” means ”ecstasy”, or ”ecstatically raving” and have given rise to the name of Odin. Odin has an alter-ego named Od, who is a lover of Freya. Od is the power of divine inspiration. The ecstasy that causes the mind to transcend outside itself. Odrörir, ”that which causes ecstasy” is the name of the divine mead that symbolically induces the divine ecstasy. Odrörir is also the cauldron or chalice where this mead is kept. This is the original Grail. The later interpretation of the Grail as a container of the blood of Christ is a medieval misinterpretation. The original Grail in Nordic spirituality is the chalice that brings ecstasy. Odrörir is the spiritual intoxication of the poets and magicians. Od is the expanded consciousness, in which one experiences the deeper meaning of the world and the coherency of the all. Od is the force that makes it possible to travel between the worlds. Od can be compared to the threads or the paths that connect the above mentioned aspects of man with creation.

9. HAMINGJA: This is the total amount of power and illumination a person is in possession of. The word denotes ”happiness” or ”luck” and is connected both to the fylgja and the Hamr. The word is derived from ”han-gengja” - a person who can change shape. The Hamingja is a supernatural power that powerful persons can achieve. With this power, one can change Hamr and have a good contact with the fylgja. The Hamingja will make a person victorious and resistant. The Hamingja is strengthened when the other aspects of the soul are awakened, conscious and in balance. The Hamingja is power and knowledge united. The Hamingja can be viewed as a universal magical power that surrounds and empowers the other aspects of a person.

There are additional principles of life and the soul in Nordic spirituality. An important term is ”megin”, which denotes ”power” and ”magic” or ”magical power”. Gods, men and natural phenomena have megin. Thor has ”asmegin” - divine power. The sea has ”hafsmegin”, the earth ”iardarmegin” etc. Magne, the son of Thor, personifies this power. The term megin corresponds to ”mattr” - power. Megin also corresponds to the Japanese term ”Ki” or the Chinese ”Chi” - terms that can be found in martial arts like Aikido, Tai Chi Chuan etc. The belts in Japanese martial arts not only indi-

cate the grade of the person, but the knot focuses the practitioner's attention to the bodily ki-centre slightly below the navel. The belt is also very central in Nordic magic and martial arts. Megingjord, the belt of Thor focuses his gigantic force.

The Nordic word "ek" means "I" and denotes the individual self of the person. Ek also denotes the name of the person. For many people the self is focused on and in the physical body, the "lik". When a person passes through the Odinic initiation the ek expands and includes all the aspects of the soul. The ek of the magician becomes one with his Hamingja.

Chapter 5

NORTHERN SORCERY AND PRACTICAL RUNEMAGIC

As in most ancient cultures, magic was a central issue in the old Norse tradition. Magic was an actual force that influenced all parts of society and the life of both man and beast. The world was magical and filled with force, which is revealed in terms that denotes the megin of nature. The Nordic spirituality was more magical than religious. There was no one-sided worshipping of the gods, but sacrifices to receive something in return. The respect for nature was great and one of the most important elements in the Nordic spirituality was the tree-cults. All trees are representing specific forces and functions. The universe consists of the tree Yggdrasil which links the different worlds together. The Yggdrasil is the world-pillar that supports the sky. If the tree is cut down, heaven will fall down and the world will be destroyed. Man was created from the trees Ash and Elm. An old thought is that the Hamr and etheric body of a person together with parts of the önd and memory will pass into a tree after the death of the physical body. The memory and appearance of a person was thought to live on in trees and in other objects in nature. In the oldest cultures, the trees were sacred and believed to be inhabited by the spirits of the ancestors. In these objects, the shape and faces of the ancestors have been seen as shadows of the dead. The ancestor-cult is the oldest form of religion and is connected to the cult around power objects in nature. The robbing and devastation of nature that has characterized our modern society is a result of our lost connection to history and our disconnection from our roots that are linked to the nature around us. Materialism and the lack of respect for nature is a result of the influence of the monotheistic religions. When the divine is placed in a diffuse world beyond our own, the result will be that the soul and focus are removed from the world. There is no state of opposition between Christianity and materialism

. They share the same world picture, with the only difference that materialism has realized the absurdity of the Christian theology. In the ancient religions the divine is everywhere and man is also a part of it. Everything is power and magic - megin - in different forms and with different amounts of force. The magician learns how to direct these forces to work in accordance with his will and desire.

Nordic spirituality consisted of both magical and religious aspects which are difficult to separate. The religious aspects have a more collective and social character, while the magical was more connected to the development and will of the individual.This book is focused on the magical aspects. Unlike the later western magical tradition, the Nordic magical tradition was not rigid and bound by laws but more intuitive and spontaneous. Nordic magic is related to shamanism and Odin is often viewed as a shaman. The Nordic magical art consists of numerous methods that are more or less related:

1. rune magic
2. ”uteseta”, sitting out and meditation
3. sigils
4. galders and incantations
5. rituals
6. natural magic
7. cult-places
8. sejd
9. Odrörir

The runes can be used in an infinite number of ways. Only ones inspiration can set the limits. Through the Edda and the Icelandic stories we can learn how to use the runes. Especially the Sigrdrifumal gives concrete information about the use of certain runes. In certain cases it is obvious what runes that are meant, in other cases one can guess or use ones discernment. First, runes of victory are mentioned.

They are to be carved on the weapon while chanting "Tyr". In the next verse ale runes are mentioned, which are to protect against dangerous women:

"On the horn thou shalt carve them
and on the back of the hand
and mark the nail Naud"

Certain help runes are mentioned, to help women with child-birth. They are to be carved on the arm while calling on the "Dises". This is probably the Bjarka rune. Also "brännings runes" are mentioned to protect ships from storms at sea. They are to be carved on the mast or on the rudder and the oar. The water rune Lagu is the most probable choice here. Runes that belong to natural magic and the art of healing are mentioned in Sigrdrifumal as "kvist runes" (branch runes):

"Branch runes thou shalt know
if healer wouldst be
Carve them on the bark
and the tree of the woods
whose branches lean towards the east"

Here we might consider the Algiz rune, whose shape is associated with branches and which has been used in protection. Also certain "målrunor" are mentioned, to make a man speak with wit and for protection. This can be the As rune. Finally the "hug runes" are mentioned, to strengthen the understanding and the hugr, which could be Ken or Dagaz:

"Hug runes thou shalt know if greater wisdom
than others you desire".

In the Havamal it is described what is needed to become a master of rune magic. There are eight things to know:

"Knowest thou how to carve them?
Knowest thou how to read them?
Knowest thou how to colour them?
Knowest thou how to test them?
Knowest thou how to ask them?
Knowest thou how to offer them?

Knowest thou how to send them?
Knowest thou how to sacrifice them?"

This is the foundation of practical rune magic.

Carve (SW: Rista): First and perhaps most important is the carving. This usually means that one carves the runes on an object made of bone, clay, wood or stone. Wood is the easiest material for carving and this can be completed with knowledge about trees and nature magic which will be presented below. To learn practical rune magic one must of course know quite a lot about the runes. The ability to carve runes is included in this knowledge. The carving itself is a magical act where the power symbolized by the runes are manifested. Create 24 pieces of clay or wood and carve one rune at a time on these. First read about every rune and meditate on its shape and meaning. Let the carving become a powerful act where you are experiencing the power of the rune manifesting. It is recommended to carve one rune per day and place it under the pillow to dream about it and its hidden symbolism. Many rune magicians have a special tool for the rune carving, called "ristir". It resembles a pricker with a wooden handle where the name of the magician is carved in runes together with f, u, th, a, r, k also in runes. If one wants to base the workings in the Uthark system one can remove the Feh rune. The carving of the magician is supposed to make an imprint in the web of Urd (Wyrd), the etheric web and on the astral plane. The magician can carve with his ristir, wand or with the fingers in the air. The rune should be visualized in the air. This can be made over an area or object which is then purified and consecrated for magical work. A common form of rune magic is to carve the suitable runes on wood or bone and to place them where the effect is wanted. Love runes were often placed under the bed of the object of ones love.

Read (SW: reda): This is also written as "knowest thou how to interpret". To read means the ability to interpret and understand the runes, as well as to place the runes in the right order and to understand their influence on each other. It is important to use the right runes at the right moment and to interpret their meaning correctly. It is possible that the understanding of the Uthark is a way of "reading" the rune row from the normal Futhark. To read your runes, you should place them in the order of the rune row. Then place them

in twelve circles, thus creating couples of opposites in the groups of four, six, eight and twelve as previously described (alternative rune arrangements). Learn about the runes and how they relate to each other. The runes are symbols of forces that will react to each other when they meet. If one does not understand how the forces react on each other the result might be devastating.

Colour (SW:färga) : The colouring of the runes is made to activate their force. They are coloured red since red is the colour of magic, megin and power. To colour something red is to activate its force. The red colour represents the blood. The runes were charged through a sexmagical elixir created from menstruation blood and sperm. In the Sigrdrifumal it is written:

> "These counseled, these carved,
> these have been concieved by Odin
> through the drink, that he had drunk from the
> head of Heidraupner and the horn of Hoddrofner".

Freya Aswynn has interpreted Heidraupner as a "kenning" for a menstruating womb and Hoddrofner as a male sexual organ. In rune magic, blood from menstruation and sometimes sperm is used, but also blood from the magician in symbolic amounts. Many magicians choose to use red paint instead for colouring the runes. This paint should be made of natural ingredients only. Colour all 24 runes you have made and visualize how they start to glow with magical power. The colouring will give the runes a magical charge. The word for magic and sorcery has in many traditions been connected to the word for the colour red. In German the word "zauber" denotes magic and can be derived to the word "teafor" which means "to colour red". Many rune magicians use a small triangular object to colour runes and magical sigils.

Test (SW: fresta) : Fresta means to test the runes. By testing the runes in magic and divination the magician will reach an ever-growing ability to use them. In divination the answers are often obscure and hard to understand until the magician has used the runes for some time. The runes are charged and their relation to the magician becomes stronger. The answers from the runes will become easier to understand and their power more tangible. For

this reason, many rune magicians will not let others use their runes and will keep them in a bag of cloth or leather. By testing the runes often you will increase your ability to use them. To test properly you should not act like an opportunist thirsting for quick results and sensations. The runes represent powers that are beyond the limited will, understanding and world picture of the common man. This must be respected and understood.

Ask (SW: bedja):

"Better is not to ask
than to offer too much;
gift demands, gift in return"

The runes correspond to forces in the universe. The rune magician asks different gods and powers to help out in the runemagical work, as when Tyr is called twice when carving runes of victory. The magician must know, however that everything that one receives demands something in return. Thus the magician understands that it is not wise to use the runes in a greedy way. The asking is connected to rune-songs and magical calls. Create short invocations to suitable gods and to some runes that you wish to use. The invocations should be characterized by balance in relation to the powers. Great respect but not submission. Odin is the most important god for the rune magician. The invocations should be simple and spontaneous, or rich in poetic qualities. It is possible to find short verses in the Sagas that are possible to use. From Egil Skallagrimsson :

"Good I was given
by the spear god,
confident
I trusted him"

Offer (SW: blota) : To offer means to sacrifice or to dedicate something. The magician sacrifices something to the gods or consecrates an area or an object by an offering. The offering in Nordic spirituality is more or less the same as conducting a ceremony. The magician conducts a suitable ceremony that connects an area or an object with the gods. Sacrifice something valuable to Odin and the runes, to be given divine guidance in the runemagical work. Also here balance is very important. The offering must not be exagge-

rated and the demands must not be too high. The magician is not sacrificing because of a submissive attitude towards the divine, but to create good relations. To offer is to make a small ceremony with the runes. It could be done simply by lighting a candle, incense and reading an invocation.

Send (SW: sända): To send also alludes to sacrificing. The magician sends the magical ritual to the world of the gods. The magician may burn runestaves and runesigils where the Will has been expressed. The smoke will reach the gods and the wish is sacrificed to them. The magician must now cease to think about the ritual and the magical work. Only when the magician has sent away the energy and left it behind will the magical result be reached. For as long as it stays in the mind of the magician it will not be activated. The different aspects of the magician's soul, like the fylgja, will carry it away to the astral worlds, in the same way as Hugin and Munin flies for Odin. Another way to send is to visualize a rune and mentally send it away in the ether.

Sacrifice (SW: slopa) : This is also connected to sacrifice. The magician completes and finishes something and leaves it to the gods. In the old Norse society enemies was sacrificed with the words: "I give thee to Odin". Thus one let something be ended. For the magician it is all about taking matters to an extreme level. A magician should not send runes in a half-hearted way. The magician must learn to give himself to the magical work, like Odin in the world tree. The magician sacrifices himself to himself.

Sitting out and meditation

All magical processes are occurring both inside and outside. The magician must not focus solely on the rune-carving but also explore the magical dimensions in the inner and the outer world. The magician must not get stuck in a too intellectual understanding of the runes. Meditation and vision-seeking have also been a very important aspect in the Nordic spirituality. One common form of contemplation and meditation from the Nordic tradition is called "uteseta" or sitting out. As the name indicates it is a journey into nature to sit

down and let the knowledge come.

The place for a sitting out must be carefully chosen. It should be a place with a powerful aura. There are two main types of places that are suitable for different forms of sitting out. There are ”light places” and ”dark places”. The light places are often on small hills or in natural open spaces with great verdure. These places are suitable for rest or gaining energy. The dark areas are often in rocky landscapes or among dead trees, dry twigs and strange vegetation. These places are suitable for vision seeking or communication with the dead. The magician will often feel what charge a place has. The light places feel safe and tranquil. The dark areas might feel threatening but also exciting and charged with great power. There are also areas that are balancing both aspects. No place is only dark or light. In dark places there are usually some very colourful plant that testifies that the presence of life is strongest in the vicinity of death. Beautiful natural areas are suitable for sitting out. It is always good to sit with the back against a tree.

There is a complete system of runic meditation and runeyoga which will be discussed below. Sitting out is mainly about stopping the inner dialogue and to open up for hidden wisdom. A sitting out may take some hours at dusk or dawn, a whole night or many nights and days. During the sitting out the eyes are generally open, but relaxed. If one falls asleep it might be part of the magical work. The magician should not try to think about anything special but try to calm down the inner ”talk” that is characterizing the consciousness of modern man. But the magician should not force any thoughts away. The thoughts that arise should be ignored and disappear naturally. The magician should not observe anything in particular but see the wholeness. One should not be passive. All senses should be alert. The more a person thinks, the more disconnected he is from the surrounding world. During a sitting out one will see and hear things that one has never previously experienced. During a successful sitting out one will become aware of the ”real” in the world. Something that modern man has isolated himself from.

Many sitting out projects will be similar to pilgrimages. The magician travels to an ancient cult-place, a ship-tumulus, a sacred spring, a historical place or a great natural area. The magician will

then meditate on a chosen spot.

There are three main positions documented in Nordic magic that are suitable during meditation. One is called ”Keltensitz”, a crosslegged position that can be seen in statues of the Celtic god Cernunnos. The other position is on the knees with the feet under the body. This is seen on Nordic statues. The third position is lying on the back with the arms on the sides of the body or crossed on the chest or belly. This position is used when meditating in a ship-tumulus. It can be varied with the back leaning towards a rock with the feet stretched out in front of oneself. During a longer sitting out the position is not as important as the inner silence. The sitting out can increase the magician's ability to see megin in nature and the web that links the universe together. This is one method to understand the power of the runes.

Sigils

Sigils and magical symbols are important aspects in Nordic magic. Many of the most significant findings are bracteates, medallions with magical inscriptions. Many of the rune row findings are on bracteates. Nordic sigil magic is often connected to talismanic magic which is called ”taufr” and also denotes magic and sorcery in general. This is the same term as ”teafor” which means ”to colour red”. In talismanic magic the sigils and runes were coloured with blood or red paint. There are two main forms of talismans, the ”teinn” which is a branch or a talisman made from wood and ”hlutr” which is any object used in divination or magic. The complete rune row was a common inscription. Other symbols that were used on Nordic talismans were:

Hagal, the Scandinavian form of Hagal represents the complete rune row and protection. It is used as a frame for creating sigils (see below).

The Achtwan, heavenly star of the eight winds. An eight armed cross that represents the complete rune row, Sleipner and the Yggdrasil. It is also used in sigils.

The ALU runes that also represents the whole rune row and the sacred force.

The Swastika. A symbol of Thor, the sun-wheel and the seasons. Midgård and agriculture. It is based on the numbers 9 and 4. The sun-cross.

The hammer of Thor. A symbol of Thor and his power. Megin and potency. This is both a hammer and a phallus. It is stylized as a T turned upside-down and is used in consecration.

The Triskele. A symbol of Odin and his trinity. Is based on the numbers 7 and 3.

The Valknut. The sign of Odin. Three triangles that are intertwined. Symbolizes the trinity of Odin and the nine worlds.

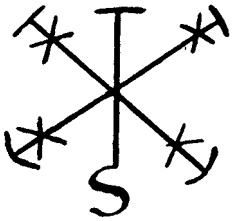
The Ægishjelmur. "The helm of dread". Four Algiz runes that creates the perhaps most powerful symbol of protection. It can be traced to the dragon Fafnir and symbolizes the power of the Dragon and the complete rune row.

One of the most important runemagical methods to direct and activate the force of the runes is through "bind runes". Different runes are combined in a symbol that represents the united and interacting forces of the chosen runes. A rune can also be charged if repeated in different directions, as in the helm of dread. Bind runes are creating very powerful sigils for magic and meditation. Create a bind rune of your name and use it for meditation.

Examples of bind runes:

ALU ODIN

In "En Isländsk Svartkonstbok från 1500-talet", we can find many advanced runic sigils. To find a thief one shall carve these staves on a box:



One should pour water into the box and then add Millefolium to the water and say:

"By the nature of this herb and the great power of this stave, may the shadow of the thief be seen in the water"

One shall also carve "iotunn villum" on a whale-bone and carry it. One shall then say:

"Odin, Loke, Frö, Balder, Njord, Tyr, Birger, Höner, Fröja, Gefion, Gusta and all the gods and goddesses that have lived and lives in Valhall from the beginning of time, may they help me to succeed in this matter".

The Icelandic book of the black arts contains many sigils to kill the cattle of others, to win love, to remove anger etc. There are even so called "fjärtrunor" which will cause terrible stomach pains. Even though it was written in days of Christianity the influence from the old Norse tradition is very strong. The incantations are revealing the old Norse world picture and have influenced modern rune magic.

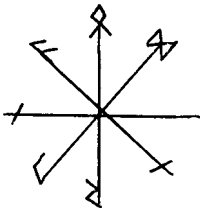
Many runemagical sigils are made of "lönnrunor" or hidden runes. These hidden or secret runes are staves with branches that indicate the rune. In some forms of secret runes the branches point upwards

and some downwards. One side of the stave indicates which ætt and the other which rune. Also here the Futhark is most common, but one can also use the Uthark. The branches to the left indicate the ætt and the right branches the rune in the ætt. Odin would thus be written 3:6, 3:7, 2:2, 2:1 and rune would be 1:4, 1:1, 2:1, 1:3.

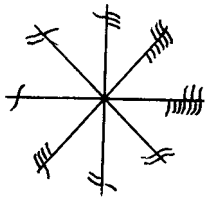
ODIN

RUNA

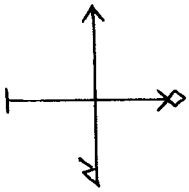
Another form of magical sigils is built around the Scandinavian Hagal rune or the eight armed heavenly star with runes, symbols, bind runes or secret runes. The inscription ODIN RUNA could become a runemagical sigil on the eight armed star either with normal runes or with secret runes:



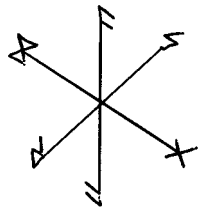
ODIN RUNA (normal runes)



ODIN RUNA (secret runes)



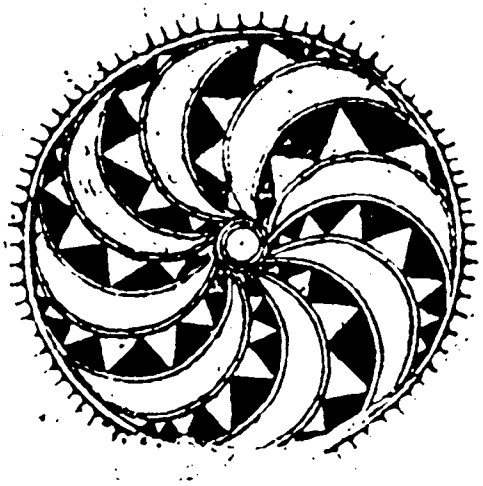
TOR (+hammer sign)



ASGÅRD

Try making a magical sign in this manner using your own name. If the name contains more than six or eight letters you can make bind runes of the letters. If the name is very short you can make an equal armed cross or a magical sign. For example: T O R + a stylized hammer.

The earliest Nordic sigils were the sun wheels and mandalas of the iron age picture-stones. The bronze and iron age were periods of greatness and high culture, something these stones can verify. The picture-stones are very common on Gotland and they are depicting dragons, serpents and multi-dimensional spiral forms. These symbols are very powerful objects for opening gates to other states of consciousness and worlds. They are also revealing the basic conceptions of the Nordic world picture. The serpent and the dragon are the most depicted and basic forms on these stones. The Pagan cultures viewed the dragon as an ally. Only at the arrival of Christianity, did the dragon-slayer myths become important. The arch-angel Michael or some other Christian hero kills the dragon, which symbolized the victory of Christianity over Paganism. The cross is the sword thrusted into the earth. The earth is the body of the dragon. On the picture-stones there are dragons around whirling sun-wheels and they are often surrounded by four guardians representing the four cardinal directions. The picture stones are suitable as meditation mandalas and altar pictures.



Galders and formulas

When Odin hangs in the world tree he receives power-songs. They are called ”galders” and are a very important part of the Nordic magical tradition. The word galder is related to ”gala” (ENG:to crow) and ”galen” (ENG:insane). The galders are supposed to be able to heal wounds, control fire, make the enemies weapons useless and hypnotize people. A galder is a word of power which is sung or called in a high-pitched voice, outside the normal voice spectrum. The ”jojk” and yodling are related methods. Power-songs can also be sung in a lower pitch, similar to Tibetan throat-singing. The galders can be used together with a drum and should be sung rhythmically. The runes that denote the vowels are sung as they are, numerous times, emphasizing the vowel sound itself, like Ur:

Ur, ur, uuuuuuuuuur, ur, ur, uuurrrr

The runes denoting the consonants are used together with the five magical vowels U, O, E, I, A. The name of the rune should be sung three times, then followed by the consonant combined with the vowels. Reid would then be sung:

Reid, reid, reid, ru, ro, re, ri , ra, reeeeeiiid

There are other examples of the order of the vowels, u, a, i , e, o or u, i, o, e, a, or u, o, a, e, i. Use the first example to create and sing galders for every rune. It does not matter how it sounds, as long as the mind is one with the galder. Contact the runes and their power through galders.

The galders denote the oral magic and the runes denote the written or carved magic. The galders are connected to incantations and magical formulas. In Nordic magic numerous magical words and names were used. The Nordic tradition is no denominational religion where one dedicates oneself only to one force. The forces and forms that suited the situation were used. This pragmatic attitude is reflected in ”En Isländsk Svartkonstbok från 1500-talet”. Especially in this incantation for forcing a woman to keep silent:

”Hereby may help me....all gods, Thor, Odin, Frigg, Fröja, Satan, Beelzebub and all gods and goddesses, that lives in Valhall. In your

mightiest name, Odin".

We can here observe that a couple of the invoked names are late inhabitants of Valhall. In another incantation the invoked gods are among others: "Lord, God, Spirit, Creator Odin, Thor, Saviour, Frö, Fröja, Oper, Satan, Beelzebub" (!).

The names are magical words of power. The art of incantation is undogmatic, but is often constructed around a repetition of the galders in a rhythmic way with alliterations and rhyme.

Rituals

There is no known complex ritual or ceremonial system in Nordic magic. It is indeed possible, however, that there once existed one around the religious cult at the temple in Uppsala. Nordic ritual magic is closely connected to the forces of nature, which are frequently used. The five elements in Nordic magic are the main foundation of ritual magic:

North

Ice

West	Midgård	East
Water	Earth	Air

South

Fire

Earth: stability, presence, unity of different parts. Realization, actuality.

Air: clarity, mental journeys, intellect. The wind of the east.

Water: fertility, feelings, sexuality. The wind of the west.

Fire: dynamic forces, pure energy. The wind of the south.

Ice: stagnation, preservation, contains hidden aspects, potentiality. The wind of the north.

The altar represents Midgård. It is a miniature of the world of the magician. The altar is in the north since that is the magical direction towards Thule, the outmost point in the north. Thule means "the place where one is forced to turn back" - the extreme north. Thule or a thul is also a term denoting a rune magician and a poet. The north is the area for potentiality, where all possibilities are frozen and can be actualized through the actions of the magician. It is good to place the altar before a great tree - an Ash or a Yew tree is very suitable, but also Birch and Oak. In the north of the altar a picture of the Hagal-crystal is placed, in the south a candle or incense is burning. in the west a chalice or horn and in the east a feather.

The Hagal-crystal: Draw or carve the symbol on clay, wood, glass or stone. During the winter it can be made in ice which is very suitable. One can also use a bowl of glass and draw the symbol in it. A crystal or diamond can also symbolize the Hagal-crystal.

The incense-bowl: Here the magician burns suitable herbs or notes with runes.

The chalice or drinking-horn: This represents the Odrörir of the gods. On the chalice or drinking-horn you can carve the runes Odrörir (ᛟᛞᚱᛟᚱᛁᚱ) and alu (ᚫᛚᚢ). The chalice can be filled with mead or other suitable beverage.

The feather: A long swan-feather is very suitable. The feather should be found in nature. All kinds of feathers can be used. The feather is used in purification.

Other ceremonial attributes:

The wand: The wand is called "gandr" or "ganden" and should be made of Ash or Hazel wood. It is used to direct forces and to carve

runes in the ether. It was traditionally used in soul-journeys and is related to the witches broom.

The spear, sword or hammer: The magician carries a weapon which is an expression of his power. The weapon is used to create the ceremonial room in the four directions.

Cape: A magician often chooses to use a cape for magical work. The cape represents the inner worlds.

The belt: The belt or power-girdle (megingjord). Although many ceremonies are conducted naked the magician uses a belt. It focuses the inner megin that is centred slightly below the navel.

Knife or sickle: This is used to cut herbs.

Ristir or tool to colour: A tool, similar to a prickle used to carve and a brush, piece of leather or wood to colour the runes.

A magical amulet: Hangs around the neck and represents the contact with the forces that it symbolizes.

Rune ceremony

Stand at the altar and light the incense. Pour herbs on the charcoal (ordinary kitchen herbs can be used here). See the smoke rise and say:

- Hell Odin and all gods and goddesses in Valhall!

Take your weapon and turn to the north and say:

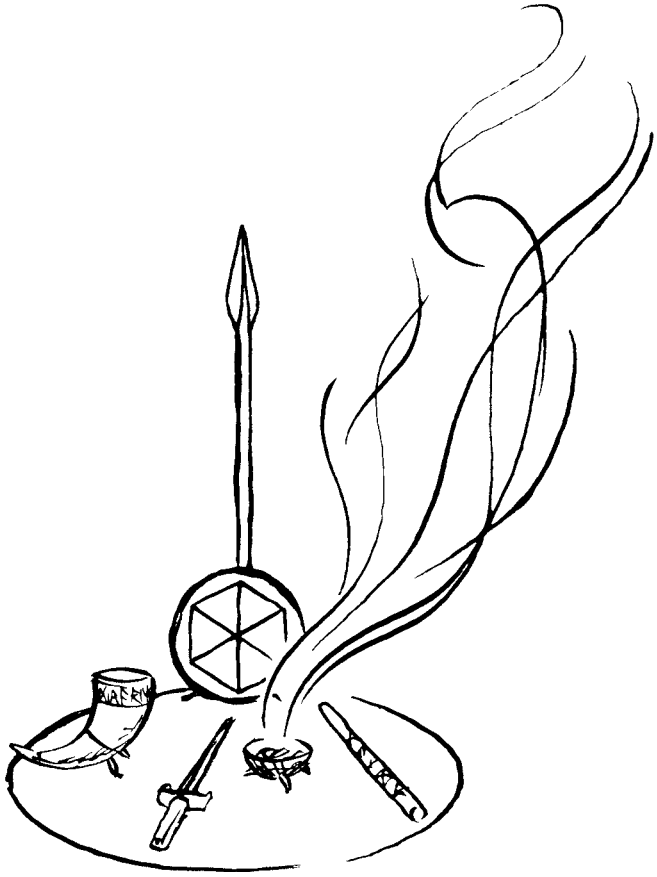
- May the Dragon and the forces of the north assist me, in the name of Nordre!

West:

- May the great bird and the powers of the west assist me, in the name of Västre!

East:

- May the powerful ox and the powers of the east assist me, in the name of Östre!



South:

- May the mountain-giant and the powers of the south assist me, in the name of Södre!

The watchers invoked are protecting the directions in the Nordic tradition. They are mentioned in the story about the Norwegian king Harald Gormsson. Continue the ceremony and cleanse your aura from all disturbing thoughts and feelings with the feather. Consecrate the drinking-horn with the wand by drawing the sign of Thor (⊥) in the air above it. Lift the drinking-horn to every direction and end in the north by saying :

- To Thule!

Drink from the chalice or horn and feel its ecstatic power. After a while speak again, when feeling the powers of Odrörir:

- Runes you may take
and staves well read
very great staves
very strong staves
coloured by the great Thule
and made by the powers
carved by a god rich in runes.

Then sit down in front of the altar and gaze into the Hagal-crystal. Galder all the runes and feel how they are activated one by one through Hagal and are linked to you.

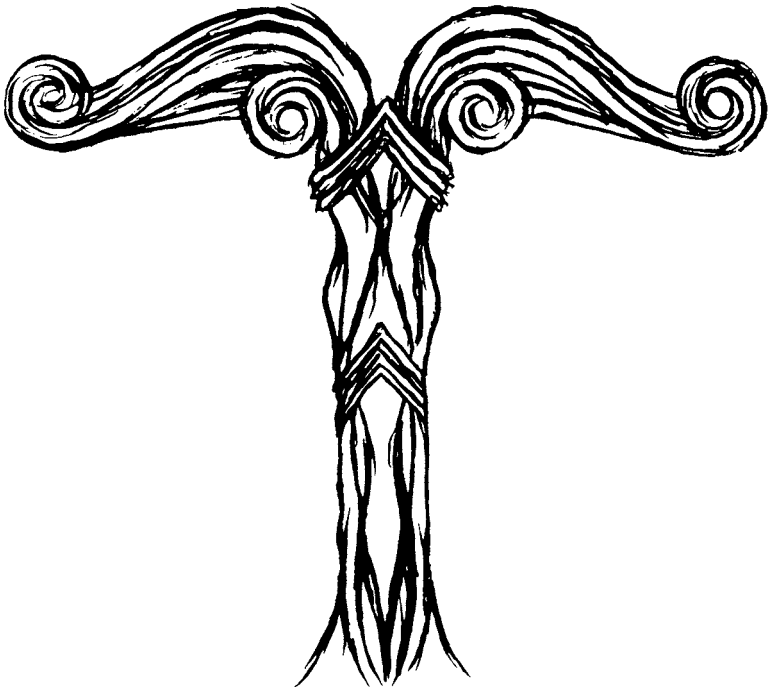
End the ceremony by standing up and saying:

- To Thule!

Natural magic

Trees were important in the Nordic cult. Sometimes symbols of trees were used, a stave or a pillar. The tree represents Axis Mundi, the world axis which links the worlds and unites heaven with the underworld. Sacred places were enclosed and in their centre stood a tree or a pillar. These places were called Pole Gardens (ON: Stavgardar) and functioned as sacrificial groves. When one entered the stavgardar one entered mythical time where the gods and the sagas were present. The sacred trees of the North symbolized Paganism and were attacked by the Christians. The Irminsul, the sacred tree of the Saxons was cut down by Karl the Great in 772 when he was about to spread Christianity into central Europe in a bloodbath in which thousands of Saxons where killed. Irminsul and Yggdrasil are different terms for the magical tree of Nordic Paganism. The tree can be found both in the myth and in the cult. Irminsul denotes "the great stave" and is like the Yggdrasil a key to other worlds.

Everything one needs for practical magic can be found in nature.



Plants, herbs and stones contain different forces that can be used for all purposes. This is a comprehensive knowledge which we will not deal with further here. We will here confine ourselves to a number of trees that are essential in Nordic magic.

Elm: The Elm is equivalent to Embla, the first woman. The Elm is associated with the female primordial force and represents both birth and death. The Elm is the mother and the womb. Originally the coffin was made of Elm which symbolized how death was a new birth.

Ash: The Ash is the tree from which the first man was created. The Ash is connected to the masculine force. Ash tree is used to create handles to tools and weapons. Magical wands can be made of Ash tree. The Ash attracts lightning and is a good medium for önd and megin. Yggdrasil is often viewed as an Ash or Yew tree.

Birch: The Birch is the most important tree in feminine magic. The Birch is a very powerful tree which was the first to return in the north after the ice-age. Birchwood is filled with energy and the Birch tree is often used to make magical objects. The Birch brings luck and protects against negative energies.

Beech: Beech tree was used to write on and for amulets where one carved sigils. The beech represents knowledge.

Oak: The Oak is perhaps the foremost tree in the Nordic cult. It represents the sky god Tyr and is connected to the all-father. Oak tree is very strong and was used to build boats and houses.

The Elder: The Elder is a very magical tree. It is the favourite tree of the fairies. The German name "Holunder" indicates the connection to Holla (Hel). The Elder should be treated with respect. It will protect while outdoors but can have a dangerous influence indoors. The Elder must not be burned since the fairies live among its branches. The juice made of the Elder is a very powerful magical drink.

Fir: The Fir represents the midwinter and the verdancy that can resist the powers of cold. The symbolism of the Fir lives on in the tradition to use a yule-tree. It originally brought bad luck to cut down a Fir during the winter, since it symbolizes the power that survives the winter. During the midwinter solstice a living Fir was adorned outdoors.

Hazel: The Hazel was used by druids and Nordic magicians to make magical wands. Hazel represents wisdom and magical power. Runes are often made of Hazel.

Yew: The Yew tree symbolizes both death and eternal life. It can become very old but is also extremely poisonous. From the Yew tree one can extract certain hallucinogen substances which have been used by shamans and witches. Perhaps it was a Yew tree from which Odin hanged, under influence of its mystical wisdom-bringing poisons. The Yew tree was called "barr-ask" and the Yggdrasil might be a Yew tree.

Linden: The Linden is a tree associated with love-magic and feminine magic. It is connected to the goddess Freya and was believed to be a tree where lovers met to receive a blessing from the tree. This was also the tree of justice and law.

Rowan: The Rowan stands for megin and protection. The red colour of the berries is connected to Thor and in Nordic mythology the Rowan saves Thor from being swept down in the underground river.

Apple: The Apple tree is the tree of life in Nordic mythology. It is the tree of the goddess Iduna. Iduna is the goddess of eternal youth. It is she who gives the fruits of life to the gods to prevent aging.

Become familiar with these trees and recognize their character and how they look. Meditate under them and feel their different forces. Trees can become powerful allies. Many magical initiations and illuminations take place under trees. Only a chosen few are mentioned above. Expand your knowledge to include additional trees and their characters.

Cult-places

A cult-place is a place or area which is consecrated to the divine powers and that in itself has a special power. Often these areas are natural places, a sacred spring, a peculiar tree, a view-point or a rock. It can also be created areas like a temple or a grave. In the Nordic cult these places are in areas which have a natural power.

The universe consists of webs of önd and megin. On earth the burning core of the planet is the generator of this force. This generator has been called the Dragon in the Nordic tradition. The Dragon is in the Nordic tradition an actual being which transmits life force to the earth. With the arrival of Christianity and monotheism not only the old faith was attacked but also the spirit of the earth and nature. The old dragon-slayer motif illustrates this. The cross is the sword that penetrates the earth - the Dragons body. The churches were built on top of the old cult-places. But unaware of this process the church did not achieve the annihilation of the old powers, instead it included the Pagan heritage. In the oldest churches, which are built on "dragonpoints" the presence of the Pagan power very tangible. An important aspect in Nordic magic is the knowledge of the force-fields and energy lines which are called "dragonlines". They can be seen by the clairvoyant and felt by sensitive people. They can be measured with tools like pendulums, divining-rods etc. This knowledge can be traced to the old Nordic tradition but has lived on in many areas of the Nordic country-side. One of the earliest documents concerning this topic is the black arts book "Le Dragon Rouge" from the 16th century. All old Norse cult-places are built in accordance with the dragon-lines.

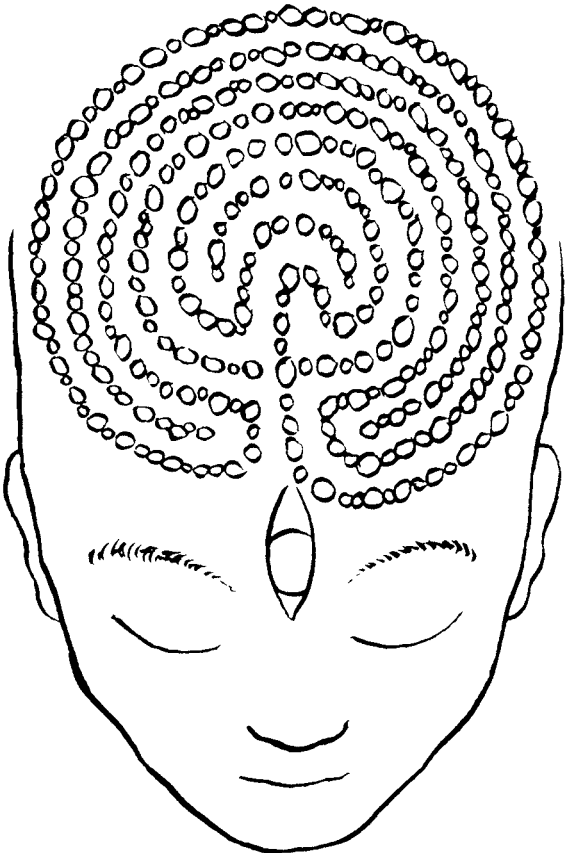
To investigate the energy-lines of cult-places with a divining-rod or pendulum is important in the process of understanding the Nordic tradition. Sitting out at these places can bring very powerful results. Many of the cult-places are constructed in such a manner that they create reactions in the force-web. It is thus possible to work magically with these power-places without access to the original constructions. If one where to build a power-place in accordance with the Nordic tradition it would cause great reactions in the surroundings. It would also have to be constructed at a point of power. We will now take a deeper look at three different forms of cult-place constructions: stone-rings, labyrinths and ship-tumuli.

Stone ring: This construction illustrates the cyclic wheel of the seasons, the day, the hours and months. In the north these were used as meeting-places and ting. Important stone rings were constructed in the form of the eight-armed star, with a great stone in the middle. In the end of each arm a big stone was placed and between these

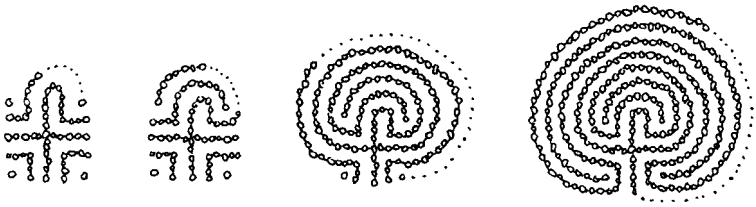
also two large stones. Together it was 24 stones in the circle. This construction becomes very powerful and contains the function of the complete rune row and the cyclic wheel. The centre stone is placed on a power-point. Smaller stone-circles can be constructed with eight stones and one in the middle. These stone-circles will become centres for magical meetings, runemagical workings and invocations of the gods. The stone in the centre can be used as an altar.

Labyrinth: In Scandinavia there are hundreds of labyrinths of different sizes. They were used in certain cultic ceremonies. They are called "serpent stones". These are not labyrinths in which one might get lost. There are two main forms of labyrinths. The most common has a path leading towards the centre where a slightly larger stone is placed. Then one will walk the same path out of the labyrinth. The less common labyrinth is one long serpentine path that brings one in and then out again. We shall here focus on the more common labyrinth. It is constructed for dance and trance-states - in combination. These serpentine paths are inducing a hypnotic influence and illustrate the brain and consciousness. The labyrinth is constructed on top of an energy vortex where there is a gate to "the other side". The labyrinth symbolizes Hel and the underworld, death and birth. To enter the centre of the labyrinth is to re-enter the original womb. To walk out of the labyrinth symbolizes birth. It is a very powerful magical act to enter the centre of the labyrinth and meditate there. This is a way to contact Hel and to be initiated in the secrets of the runes. The exit will then represent rebirth. In the Nordic cult a young woman was often standing in the middle of the labyrinth. The ones who entered the labyrinth were supposed to save her and bring her back. This theme can be found in many myths, and in magical systems where the divine spark is symbolized by a woman trapped in the middle of matter. In the centre of the labyrinth there are possiblities to reach very powerful experiences of wholeness, to see the web of Urd (Wyrd), the runes and the önd, and to release the soul. The path through the labyrinth can be compared to the initiation process of the Uthark.

A classical labyrinth can be constructed in the following way:



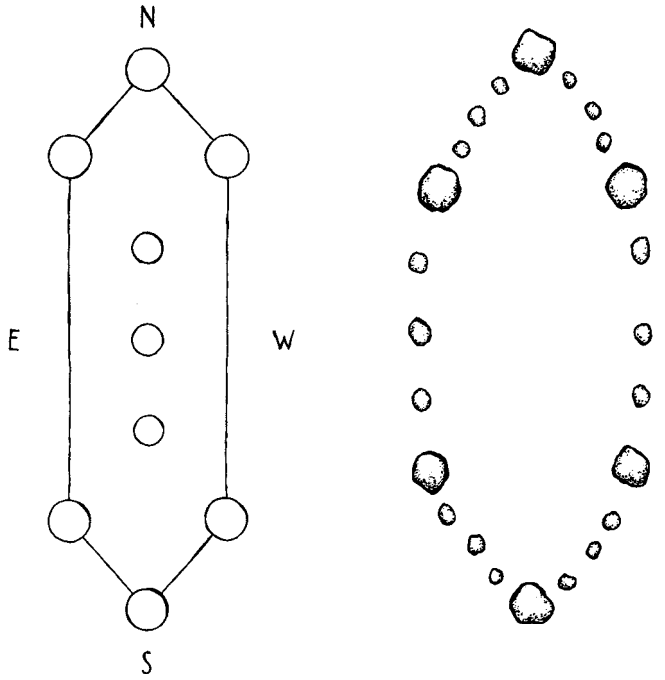
Ship-tumuli: A ship-tumulus is a craft for reaching the other side. They are illustrating boats but also wombs. The have a crystalline form and are built on places where the earth-power creates a sort of vacuum in time and space. These are sometimes called ”crystal-gates” and are believed to make journeys to other worlds and other states of consciousness possible. It is even more important to find the right place when creating a ship-tumulus. The construction itself will create a positive energy-structure for the opening of a gate, but they should be placed on a natural gate if they are to work perfectly. A ship-tumulus is constructed in the same way as the symbol of the Nordic world tree. One can sit or lie-down in a ship-tumulus and they are also suitable for a group of magicians. A ship-tumulus is illustrated below:



Sejd

The art of sejd is one of the most important aspects of Nordic magic. It is a dark tradition which resembles the sinister left hand path. Sejd is a technique that includes ecstatic trance which releases the soul or Vård. Sejd can be compared to a ”little death” where the practitioner achieves the possibility to see the future and the unknown. Sejd brings great powers and magical abilities and is connected to the art of shape-shifting (Hamfarir). In the Nordic tradition there were ”white sejd” which was concerned with knowledge about harvest,

the year and the future. There were also a "black sejd" which was associated with death-rituals and curses. The sejd was conducted by the völvas, the wise women, but also by a small number of men. In



the old Norse society it was viewed as extremely unmanly for men to be associated with sejd. This did not stop Odin from learning this powerful technique. For this, Loke mocks him in the Edda poem Loketrätan:

"Also sejd it was claimed that you
practised on Samsö.
you the superstition of valor used;
in the shape of magician
you wandered the world;
praise for shameful unmanliness".

The art of sejd was included in the feminine mysteries since it was connected to birth and death - the gates that the soul passes through. The goddess of sejd was Freya and sejd is characteristic of Nordic witchcraft. The riding on brooms is a heritage from the art of sejd. The phallic broom was used in sejd as a tool for inducing ecstasy. Freya taught Odin sejd, and through sejd he could gaze into the future or strike people with madness, illness or death. Sejd is related to the art of the ecstatic oracles in Tibet and other parts of the world.

A classical description of sejd can be found in the tale of Erik Röde. The wise seeress Torbjörg, whose nine sisters had also been seer-women, walked from house to house. People wanted to know about the future, about coming harvests. She arrived clad in a blue cape decorated with stones. The cape was strapped with leather and a necklace of glass-pearls hung around her neck. She had a lamb-skin hood and on her hands she wore cat-skin gloves. The cat is Freya's animal and connected to sejd. She wore veal-skin shoes with long straps with brass-bells. In her belt hanged a leather-purse with her magical tools and she carried a staff clad with brass and pearls. Everyone saluted her respectfully and she was served "goatsmilk-porridge" which was made of the hearts from certain animals. A tall sejd-seat was arranged for her and a number of women sat down in a circle around her. One of the women sang a magical song, a "Vardlokkur" which is required in sejd. The song was so beautiful that many spirits had been attracted, according to the wise woman. Most of her prophecies were also to come true.

Vardlokkur is a form of galder or magical song that takes the practitioner of sejd into the trance and guides the soul, but it can also be used to invoke spirits or find lost souls. The singing is important in sejd. A story from Norway tells us that a choire, consisting of fifteen young men and fifteen young women was used at one occasion. In the story of the Laxdalingarna it is mentioned how a sejd-man is sitting on the sejd-seat and galders with such power that a storm hits the enemy. The art of sejd is described in the Ynglingasaga in relation to Odin:

"Odin himself could practise the art which is most powerful and is called sejd, through this art he could learn the fate of people and what the future would bring, to destroy and bring death and illness.

He could take the wit or force from someone and give it to another. But to practise this art was viewed as so unmanly that is was not suited for men, thus the women were taught this art".

Odin, the devoted seeker of truth will not be stopped by any views about what was decent or suitable. He learns sejd through Freya who also was his mistress. The art of sejd is connected to sex magic. By arousing a strong sexual excitement and instead of orgasm directing the energy upwards to the consciousness it is possible to free the soul. The same technique was used by the Indian tantrics to awake the kundalini, to free the astral body and to open the third eye. The word sejd denotes "inner heat" or "boiling" and is a method to activate the inner fire. The wand, drum-rythms and Vardlokkur is used to reach the ecstasy of sejd.

Odrörir

In western occultism the mysteries of the Grail have attracted the attention of many scholars and magicians. The Grail is often described as a cauldron or chalice. In the most famous version it is the chalice that Jesus shared with his disciples during the last supper. With this chalice Joseph of Arimatea gathered the blood of the crucified Jesus. The angels brought this chalice to Mont Salvatsch where king Titurel built a temple for the Grail. An order of knights whose purpose was to guard the Grail was created. The Grail contains the divine power and its present location is shrouded in mystery. Seekers of the Grail like king Arthur and his knights have traveled all around the world to find it. Only one who is pure in spirit can find it and finally the innocent Parzifal is the one who succeeds.

The Christian version of the Grail was formulated during the middle ages. It is heavily influenced by older Nordic myths. Originally the Grail did not belong to the Christian tradition, but to the Odinic mystery cult. The mysteries of the Grail are one of the most important aspects of the Nordic tradition. The old Norse symbol of the Grail is the chalice or cauldron Odrörir. It contains the mead of ecstasy and inspiration, brewed of the blood from a dead god. The mead is also called Odrörir, which means "that which creates

ecstasy". The ecstasy or "od" is the divine inspiration which is in fact the essence of the all-power of Odin. The Odic mead has its origin in the peace between the Æsir and the Vanir. A bowl was placed in the middle and both races spat in it. Saliva was used in ale-brewing in the old Norse society. From the saliva of the two god-races the wisest of all gods arose: Kvaser. He was later killed by two dwarves, Fjalar and Galar. They collected the blood of the god and mixed it with honey. Thus the fantastic mead called Odrörir was brewed. The giant Suttung finally gains possession of Odrörir and he keeps it in a mountain guarded by his daughter Gunnlöd. Odin makes a journey to steal the sacred mead. Under the name of Bölverk (he who causes evil) he makes Suttungs brother Bauge drill a hole in the mountain wall where Odrörir is kept. In the shape of a snake he crawls in through the hole. He seduces Gunnlöd and stays with her for three nights and she promises him three sips of the mead. Odin swallows all mead in three deep gulps and is transformed into an eagle. He flies back to Valhalla where he spits out the mead. On the way he spills some drops of the mead. These drops are the small poetic gift that ordinary people and lesser poets might possess. Odin is the first Grail-knight and the myth about Odrörir describes an initiation process.

Odrörir is a brew that induces visions, similar to the Indian "Soma". Soma is like Odrörir both a god and a brew. Soma is connected to the moon and magical inspiration. Both Odrörir and Soma has been interpreted as brews containing hallucinogen mushrooms, which could explain their use in the cult. We know from other cults that certain mushrooms are believed to be the flesh and blood of the gods. This could explain the outer aspect of the myth of Odrörir, Soma and the Grail.

The chalice is the outer form of the Grail. In a medieval German minnessänger tale it is told that the Grail originally is an emerald in the crown of Lucifer. At the fall of Lucifer, the emerald fell into the underworld. Wolfram von Eschenbach who wrote about Parzifal in the 13th century, writes about the Luciferian stone Lapis Exillis which has divine powers and is the real Grail. Seekers of the Grail and alchemists are in search of this stone - "The Philosophers Stone". In certain versions of the Grail myth this chalice was born from this

stone. The chalice would give man a possibility to contact the divine power of the eye. The stone from the crown of Lucifer represents the divine eye or third eye which in India is called the eye of Shiva. In the Nordic tradition this is the eye of Odin which he sacrifices in the well of Mimer. The well of Mimer represents memory and the unconscious. The well, and the eye that Odin sacrifices, is represented by the Moon. The sacrifice in the well of Mimer is related to the Grail myth and the initiation process that the legend of Odrörir describes. The most important aspect of the mysteries of Odin is to reach the ecstasy which awakens the divine eye.

Chapter 6

RUNE YOGA

A recurrent thought in most esoteric traditions is that sounds, speech, numbers, letters, colours, gods, symbols etc, represent each other through occult correspondence. Thus the runes can be linked to galders, gods, symbols and speech. If the runes are viewed as cosmic principles it is important to expand their signification beyond their shape and function as writing-letters. In German rune magic a system was developed where magicians contacted the powers of the runes through different body-positions. These can also be used to direct and control the forces. In Friedrich Marby's version this was called "rune-gymnastics". Siegfried Adolf Kummer called it "rune-yoga". After them, many rune magicians have worked with runes and body-positions. There is no evident support, however, for rune-yoga as an old Norse phenomenon. The Gallehus-horn is often used to support these theories. This horn features pictures of people in positions that are reminiscent of certain runes.

If one studies the existing systems of rune-yoga, one will find that many positions are long-winded. Thus many rune-magicians have dismissed rune-yoga altogether. One could criticize the existing rune-yoga for trying to imitate exactly the shape of the runes with the body at any cost. It ends up reminding of charades and the positions often become uncomfortable. The imitation of the shapes of the runes often feels far-fetched. If we assume that the runes represent cosmic principles it is not as important to solely imitate their shape. We will here present a rune-yoga that has been developed into a rune dance. This has been developed in Dragon Rouge, but can be varied to fit the personal experience of the runes. The twenty-four positions or "stödhur" does to a certain extent rely on the shape of the actual runes, but also express their function and character.

Several runes in the rune row are based on a stave which is shaped as a vertical line. Thus the Ice rune denotes a starting-point in rune yoga where one stands upright in concentration. The stave represents the spine and the rune row is a description of different energy levels which emanates from the spine into the body-mind complex. This corresponds to Indian kundalini yoga. The Ur rune denotes the untamed primal serpent power which the magician learns to control through the rune row and the twentyfour rune positions. At the Feh rune the magician's will is able to control this force. The stave of the rune represents the world axis Irminsul. The word Irminsul denotes "the great stave". The name Iormundgandr, the great serpent which encircles the world, also denotes "the great stave". The serpent and the stave are two expressions of the same principle. The force that rises up through the spine. In kundalini yoga Iormundgarndr represents the kundalini and Irminsul the spinal channel Sushumna through which the kundalini arises.

24 rune positions

UR: Lean forward and feel the primordial power or Ur and the volcanic force that boils in the centre of the earth. Most positions can be varied, including this one. It can be conducted with straight legs and the body bent forward with arms hanging down and the palms against the ground. But it can also be conducted with bent legs, or without the hands touching the ground.

THURS: Stand straight with your arms stretched out and hands clasped. The arms represent the two Thurs-realms. Feel how the right arm is fire and the left ice (if you are right-handed). The clasped hands represent the two extremes united and the arms create the spike that makes the Thurs rune complete.

AS: Stand straight with arms stretched out in front of you without bringing your hands together. Between the arms you can feel the power of the wind brought back and forth through your breaths.

REID: Stand straight with one leg in front of the other in a firm position. Hold your arms in front of you, one hand above the other.

You are standing as if you were driving a carriage and holding the reins, or standing with a sword in hand.

KEN: Stand straight with open arms. Feel the force from fire, heat and expansion.

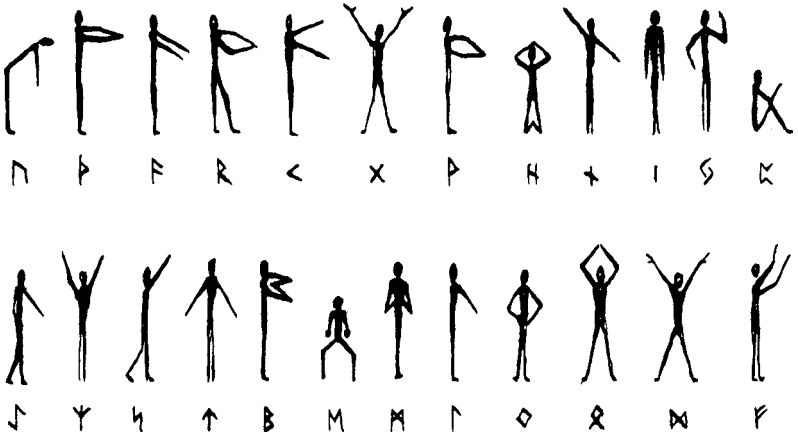
GIFU: Stand with legs wide apart and arms stretched above your head thus standing in an X-form. The hands should be stretched upwards. Experience how power is flowing down from heaven and up from the earth through your body. It flows through you in both directions.

WYNJA: Stand straight and hold your arms in a wide embrace.

HAGAL: Sit down on your heels with the legs slightly apart. Rest the elbows on the knees and keep the upper-arms directed upwards, but the fingers inwards to the head. Experience how you are focusing your power and keeping it inside in the same way that the Hagal-crystal contains all the runes and their power inside.

NAUD: Stand straight with arms on the sides of the body. One arm should point upwards and the other downwards. You can change the position of the arms in a wheel-like motion, representing the wheel of destiny.

IS: Stand straight with arms on the side of the body. You are focusing yourself, your force and you are present here and now, though passive.



JARA: Stand straight with one arm in front of you, the forearm pointing straight upwards. The other arm should be behind you, forearm pointing downwards. Let the arms rotate clockwise. You shall illustrate the wheel of the year and the work of the harvest.

PERTRA: Sit on your heels with the feet apart. The arms should be pointing forwards with upper arms pointing straight up. The fingers should point outwards. This position reminds of the Hagal-position but is striving outwards and the elbows are not resting on the knees. You are the rock that gives birth.

EIHWAZ: Stand straight with your left foot behind the right and your left arm pulled up at the side holding your hand at the waist-level. The right arm should point forwards, slightly downwards. You shall illustrate the Yew tree and an archer.

ALGIZ: Stand straight with arms raised above the head. Feel how you are standing like a tree, visualizing the trunk and the crown. Feel the force flowing through you and express reverence for the sacredness of your body.

SOL: Stand straight with the left foot behind the right and the right arm stretched forwards, upwards. This is the salutation of the sun.

TYR: Stand straight with the arms stretched outwards from the body pointing slightly downwards. You are Irminsul, the sacred tree of Paganism. You are also illustrating the border between heaven and earth with your arms. You are experiencing the feeling of flying like the eagle.

BJARKA: Stand straight with fists clenched at the chest and the elbows straight forward. The position can illustrate two female breasts or one holding a spear or wand hard at the chest.

EH: Stand with your legs spread wide and with knees bent. Hold the fists clenched at the waist. This position is called the ”horse-stance” and can be found in many martial arts.

MANNAZ: Stand straight with arms crossed over your chest. You are the perfect man in balance with the planets, the stars, the web of Urd (Wyrd) and the runes. These different cosmic forces are interacting inside you.

LAGU: Stand straight with one arm stretched forward with the palm turned downwards to the earth. Feel moisture and water-veins with your body and the hand.

ING: Stand straight holding your arms above the genitals or lower belly. The elbows are pointing outwards horizontally from the body. You are channeling the inherent sexual force in the seed and the Ing rune.

DAGAZ: Stand with legs wide apart and arms stretched above the head, creating the shape of a X. Unlike the Gifu rune the palms are here turned outwards. You are beaming like the sun and are feeling the force of the rune flowing through your. Stand with the left hand turned to the west and the right hand to the east. The hands represent the day between sunrise and sundown.

ODAL: Stand with your legs spread wide, hands clenched slightly above the head. The elbows should point horizontally outwards. This position gives power and protection. It centres and limits the mind.

FEH: Stand straight with arms stretched outwards. The lower-arms points upwards, hands clenched. You are illustrating the horn of tame-cattle and are holding riches and runes.

Try every rune-position and feel the force and character of the rune. This is an effective way to reach knowledge about the runes and their function. You will become one with the rune. Galder the name of the rune while standing in the position. Make series of ”rune-movements”. Begin to learn how to ”dance the runes”. Make the whole rune row in a series of movements. When you have learnt this, proceed to include the galders. A drum can indicate the rhythm of the dance. Try to dance your name. Move in runic positions which formulate magical words and incantations like RUNA, ALU, LAUKAZ or the names of gods. There is a number of rune-movements which can express magical processes. Dance the movement IS-MANNAZ-KEN-HAGAL-AS-GIFU. This illustrates the process in which what is inherent in the ice is also inherent in man. Through the fire, parts of the ice are removed and fall down as hail. Through the breath of the gods man receives the soul-gifts. Create your own series describing magical processes.

Chapter 7

RUNIC DIVINATION

The interpretation of omens and seeing into the future has always been parts of magic. In the Nordic tradition the runes have always been the most important tool. All forms of divination are based on a philosophy of existence and its construction. The different symbols that are used in a divination are also symbols of different forces and tendencies in existence. These symbols, the I Ching, the Tarot or runes, can reveal what forces are presently active. A divination will map the present tendencies and can thus present a picture of the future. Runic divination has ancient roots. Tacitus describes how a runic oracle was used by the Germanic tribes. They took a branch from a fruit-tree and cut it into little pieces which were marked with signs. The pieces were randomly spread over a white cloth. The oracle gazed up towards the sky and called on the gods, after which he picked up signs three times.

The runes are aspects of the web of destiny called the web of Urd (Wyrd). This web is connected to time. The three Norns Urd, Verdandi and Skuld who are weaving the thread of the web are representing the three forms of time: what was, what is and what is to come. Skuld is the youngest of the Norns and her face is concealed. Since she reveals the future it shows us that it is hidden from us. But the future is not only hidden, it is also indefinite. History and the present flows like a thread which disappears into the shrouded future, but where it finally will be cut lies in the hands of men. By reading the web of Urd with the runes we can understand the present age and the past, but also lift the veil of Skuld and see what is hidden in the future.

One of the most basic forms of rune-divination is to draw three runes which will signify the three Norns. The first will signify the

past, the second the present and the third the future. By seeing the connection between the three drawn runes the picture will be clearer and the answer easier to understand. One can use the Tarot-systems of placing the cards, like the celtic cross, but use runes instead. A suitable runic divination is constructed as the Yggdrasil. Nine runes are placed in the structure of the nine worlds. First one places a rune in the middle of Midgård. This represents the person who is seeking advice. The other orders of placing can be varied.

Midgård: The person who is seeking advice. It also represents the present situation in its obvious form and possibly the question itself.

Jotunheim: Background, history, memories and context. The background of the person or the question.

Ljusalfheim: Reason and the intellect. Ones intellectual view and conception. The intellectual map.

Svartalfheim: Feelings, instincts, motive and the driving force. Svartalfheim can also describe the persona.

Vanaheim: The companion, relationships and the surroundings. The spiritual relations with the fylgja can be revealed here as well as earthly and sexual relations. Vanaheim can also describe the future and seeds that one sows in the present.

Asgård: Ideals and goals.

Helheim: The unconscious, Fears, dreams and hidden instincts.

Muspelheim: Dynamic and active forces behind something. What makes someone expand outwards and continue.

Nifelheim: Forces that slow things down and focuses.

If there appears to be an unbalance between Nifelheim and Muspelheim there is a risk that the person either burns out (Muspelheim) or stagnates (Nifelheim). According to the same principle the other worlds are balanced in pairs: feelings (Svartalfheim) should be balanced with the intellect (Ljusalfheim), ideals and the super-ego (Asgård) with the unconscious (Helheim), the fertile future (Vana-

heim) with the past (Jotunheim). Midgård is in the centre and any eventual balance or chaos can be revealed in the worlds around.

Another method is based on the five elements of Nordic spirituality: earth, ice, fire, air and water. Earth is in the middle, ice above, fire below, air to the right and water to the left. The different elements can have different meanings in the divination, for example:

Earth: The one seeking advice and the question itself.

Ice: An obstacle or a focusing of energy.

Fire: What energizes or burns out.

Air: Thoughts and ideas.

Water: Feelings and intuition.

In certain systems of runic divination a special meaning is given to runes that appear upside-down or reversed. Runes that appear upside-down will have an inverted meaning. If the Tyr rune would appear upside-down it could thus be interpreted as disorder and lawlessness. Some runes can not be inverted but becomes reversed. They can be interpreted as having a reversed meaning. Ken reversed might not mean water in such an interpretation, but rather a declining fire instead of increasing. A third group of runes can appear both upside-down and reversed. Lagu, for example, could then be interpreted as a water leaking out which leads to drought. Like all interpretations in divination the meaning is understood when considering the situation, the questioner and the question. The only way to learn how to read the runes is to work with them often. Many rune magicians are not using the system where the runes can be interpreted upside-down or reversed. Then the runes will have the same meaning regardless of how they are drawn.

An interpretation of runes

Here follows a suggestion of how the runes can be interpreted in divination. This can be modified depending on the situation and the person asking advice. Feel free to expand the possibilities of interpretation as much as possible, but without leaving the Nordic and runological core.

UR: Primordial force. Return to the source. If you are facing a problem, you should go back to the beginning and for a moment leave your present plans and solutions behind. Let the situation be an unwritten page again and get ideas and energy from the many possibilities that this offers.

THURS: Chaos and conflicts, which can lead to new possibilities. Thurs is the rune of the giants and they are living in the world outside the known world. The Thurs rune symbolizes the importance of daring to go out into the unknown to find something new. The unknown can appear frightening at first and force one into chaotic situations before it is understood and mastered. The Thurs rune is the rune of black magic and witchcraft and it reveals the possibility of choosing unusual forces and solutions. Thurs also reminds us of the strength and learning that one can get from leaving the ordered life and enter the wild nature or other new environments. In a life-analysis, Thurs can advice one to balance old conflicts and opposition. A new creation arises through the balance between the two primordial Thurs-realms Nifelheim and Muspelheim.

AS: Creation, life force and the power to create. The rune of the gods symbolizes the possibility to create something new and enter a new situation. A creation is never a calm process. The gods slay Ymer to create the world and the power of creation is closely connected to the storm. Creation demands that one leaves the old behind and breaks loose from passivity

and the unorganized to create something new. The rune can also reveal the possibility to bring something old back to life and to give it new power, just as the gods give the logs Ask and Embla life.

REID: Order and structure. The rune of Thor advices one to be like Thor. To use force and responsibility to gain control of life or a certain situation. The rune also denotes a journey. Not the loosely structured journey of Thurs, but in a wagon where one has full control. This is also a journey where ones purpose is clear and one has a certain goal in sight. The Reid rune advices one to do the right thing even if one meets resistance.

KEN: Fire and energy. The Torch rune symbolizes the Will and energy that is your driving force. The Will can both bring light and clarity, but also burn the ground. Fire is both playful and dangerous. Ken can also indicate illumination, sometimes as a painful insight in a certain matter. Ken advices one to use the fire, but as in the form of the torch, with control.

GIFU: To give and to take. In the old Norse world, relations were based on gifts. Both in relations between people, in the religion and towards the ancestors. The Gift rune advices one to be generous and willing to sacrifice. The Gift rune illustrates a balanced relation between gifts and gifts in return. It is a karmic rune which advices you to free yourself of debts and dependencies. The Gift rune reveals the importance of giving back to coming generations what you have been given, just as the importance to give respectful gifts in return to the previous generations, the ancestors and the gods. The gifts shall increase in size, but without exaggerating. It advices one to give, but not to heap away gifts without careful thoughts. Giving should be balanced.

WYNJA: Joy and wishes. The Joy rune describes how wishes are fulfilled, just like the force that arises in happiness. The Joy rune describes the joy that can be found in the small things in life, just like the great happiness and harmony we can experience through good relations with the gods and the other worlds.

HAGAL: The seed of knowledge. Wisdom through destruction. Hagal contains the secrets of the runes and thus of life. These are revealed when one confronts death and destruction. By confronting that which one would rather not see at all, one will reach the essential in life. One learns how to make the right choices when using death as an adviser. When we are gazing into the destruction brought by the Hail rune, Hagal reveals that the water of life can be found inside it. We will realize that we do not need to fear the inevitable. We will rather see it as a source of wisdom, force and joy. Hagal is the seed of possibilities. Hagal advices one to seek the essential in life - not to make small-minded choices because of laziness, but to see everything in a greater perspective even though it will be difficult at first . Hagal is the rune of the dark goddess Hel and through her wisdom one can see everything as a united whole.

NAUD: Need and necessity. Time and fate. This rune can indicate difficulties and obstacles in ones path. These problems can be defeated only by a great self-sacrifice. The rune corresponds to the nine day sacrifice of Odin in the Yggdrasil, and with the goddesses of time and fate - the three Norns. The rune advices one to accept fate and see it as a possibility to reach heightened knowledge and insight. This is the rune of initiation and it teaches one to find the true Will in the structures of fate. The rune represents necessity and the inevitable and it advices one not to be scared by this, but to find strength in it to progress. The Naud rune also describes the birth after the nine months of pregnancy - the inevitable pains of giving birth that leads to new life. In the same way, the Naud rune teaches us to work through other difficulties with the firm belief that they will lead to something new and better.

IS: Concentration and rest. Focusing and awakening. The Ice rune describes the importance of resting and to enter lethargy and trance, just like the bear enters hibernation. The rest is a state where one preserves. The preservation is very important if one is to be able to create something. The ice balances the fire which symbolizes the Will and its ability to constantly move on, but also to burn. The Ice rune advices one to be

aware and present and to be thoughtful. The Ice rune can also warn for things that might be frozen. At some point everything which lies frozen in the ice must be taken out.

JARA: The cycles of nature and the seasons. Return. The Year rune reveals the cycles of nature and how day follows night, how spring comes after winter etc. This is the rune of the ecological cycles. It denotes good harvests and fertility. Jara signifies play, dance and marriage. It reveals the marriage between Frey and Freya. It symbolizes harvest-feasts and the festivals of the year. The Year rune also represents the eternal return where the old is constantly reborn in new forms. The rune advices one to sow and to reap, and to see everything in its cyclic form.

PERTRA: Hidden treasures. The underworld. This rune is connected to the feminine mysteries and the female womb. Pertra corresponds to the well of Urd and represents both the womb and the grave. It represents the well which is hidden in the underworld, in the mountains and the rocks. Here in the hidden the seed of life and destiny can be found and we will return here after death. In a divination the Pertra rune can signify a discovery of hidden treasures and new sources of power and inspiration. Pertra is describing the bag in which the runes are placed. It describes the play of fate, which we can all join.

EIHWAZ: Hunting and journeys between the worlds. This rune belongs to the male mysteries and is connected to the masculine sex. It illustrates the world-axis which stretches between the regions of life and death. The Yew tree symbolizes life as well as death and dying. This is the rune of hunting and archery. In a divination, Eihwaz advices one to be goal-directed and to enter into ones hunting grounds. Eihwaz describes the regions of trees and wild nature where we can find knowledge about the unknown.

ALGIZ: Protection. The force of nature and the gods. Algiz is one of the most powerful runes of protection. It illustrates a horned animal, a tree and a man with out-stretched arms. Algiz

describes how one is seeking contact with higher powers and how one receives protection from them. The Algiz rune can be interpreted as an awakening of the sexual forces and how that might activate the fighting spirit. In a divination about spiritual development the rune can be interpreted as the awakening of the inner force and how it strives up towards the divine.

SOL: The force of the sun. The Sun rune represents light and summer, awakening and energy. It can also promise victory and protection. The force of the sun gives warmth and life and can be used in healing. The Sun rune is the fiery energy which unlike the Ken rune is not controlled by man. The Sun rune can also warn about the burning power of the sun. We should not stand outside in the light constantly. We must balance the heat of the sun with the rest and thoughtfulness of darkness and coolness.

TYR: Courage and victory, law and order. The Tyr rune describes how one through courage and self-sacrifice can reach success and victory. This is no mere egoistical success, but the joint success which demands that we give of ourselves. The Tyr rune illustrates the common laws and rules that upholds the common order and creates the structure that can preserve something. The Tyr rune advices one to be brave and to reach victory and success through self-sacrifice.

BJARKA: Birth and rebirth. This is the most important of the feminine runes. It is connected to Frigg and Freya. It represents strength and courage to bring life in the cold and sterile thus beginning a new and fertile epoch. It represents both love and witchcraft. The brushwood of the witches broom was made from Birch and the Birch rune can symbolize how one is entering the other worlds. The Birch rune advices you to have the power to bring life to where there is none.

EH: Relationships and friendship. Journeys and communication. Trust as a foundation for entering the unknown. The Horse rune describes the friendship and symbiosis between horse and rider. In order to dare to start beginning a journey into the unknown one must have a deep trust in the compa-

nions of the journey. The Eh rune promises friendship and trust but it demands that we shall take care and responsibility of our relationships and answer with trustfulness and good spirit of comradeship.

MANNAZ: Self-realization. Man in harmony with the divine. The male and female in balance. The Man rune illustrates a man who is conscious and whole. To become a whole person without inner disunion and inconsistent living is the most important and perhaps most difficult work for a person. It is a striving towards a self-realization which do not become small-mindedness and egoism, but which demands self-sacrifice and a great respect for the hugeness that surrounds us - gods, nature, ancestors, fellow humans and the future that we are creating. Mannaz advices you to strive towards an inner balance and an inner attitude of consistency and consequence where you are aware of your choices and take responsibility for your actions. You can grow by seeing yourself in a greater picture.

LAGU: Water, feelings, fantasies and dreams. The Lagu rune describes the dreamy feelings as a contrast to the Will-related feelings of the Ken rune. This is the rune of art, intuition and visions. Just like water, these feelings can take many different forms. They can purl like a stream or spread out vast like an ocean. They can freeze and they can boil. The Lagu rune advices you to release the creative fantasies and explore the world of dreams, but Lagu also warns you about the risk of drowning in feelings and planless visions that never reaches the shore.

ING: Creativity and fertility. Sow a seed for the future. The Ing rune illustrates a seed that contains the essential. Ing describes a concentration of the essential - the core of something. Ing also describes how one plants the essential to enable something even greater to arise in the future. Ing is the masculine generative power and it illustrates the male seed. The Ing rune advices one to be creative and to focus on what is essential, and to make it grow into the future.

ODAL: Relatives and ancestors. Safety and stability. Roots. The Odal rune describes our connection to our ancestors and the environment in which we grew up. It reveals our need to be rooted in tradition and history. To be able to grow and explore new areas, one must always have a firm ground to return to. You are constantly creating this foundation and must never stop struggling to keep it. Odal can also warn us not to hide behind traditions or to renounce ones free Will by referring to history. Odal also advices one to be a freeholder and to avoid situations of negative dependence.

DAGAZ: Awakening. A new day. Clarity and consciousness. The Day rune describes how one is arising from the chrysalis and reaches a new consciousness through rebirth. A new day is reached by leaving the old behind.

FEH: Wealth and reward. Taming the wild. The Feh rune promises a reward for hard work. It describes how one by entering the unknown can tame it and gain control over it. Here one can find new riches. One must not stagnate, however, and merely sit on top of the newly acquired knowledge and wealth. One should use it wisely and with responsibility.

Chapter 8

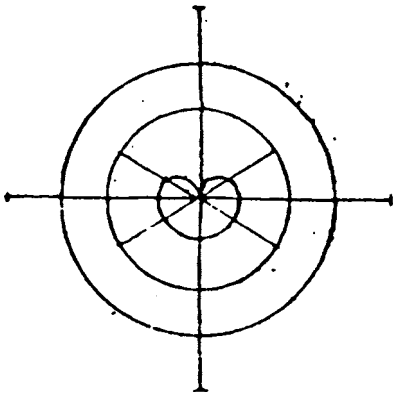
RUNOSOPHY AND QABALAH

A deeper study of the runes and old Norse magic will reveal many similarities to the Qabalah. The deep and magical character of the runes was noticed by Olof Verelius (1618-1682), professor in antiquities of the native country. According to the instructions of Olof Rugman from Iceland (1636-1679) he created a structure for magical use of the runes. The runes were both ”målrunor” (letters for writing) and ”trollrunor” (magical signs). The ”trollrunor” were the magical forms of runes and could be divided into twenty levels or alphabets with increasing power. In the first level the names of the runes indicated what they symbolized. The rune (ᛘ) was for example called madher which denotes ”man” or ”human”. In the second level a characteristic quality was added, as in this example: madher moldar auki, which means ”man is the fornication of the soil”. Level by level the meaning of the runes was deepened and at the seventh level one would need the wisdom of a seer to understand it. Here the really dark runes appear, such as skaderunes, linrunes, speldrunes etc. Those who were initiated in the highest levels of the runes could use them to ”call forth the dead and conjure evil spirits”. The deep and hidden meanings of the runes are reminiscent of the letter-mysticism of the Qabalah and other similar traditions like the magical use of Sanskrit in Tantra or the esoteric levels of Greek. Verelius believed that the runes were dangerous Pagan symbols used in black magic.

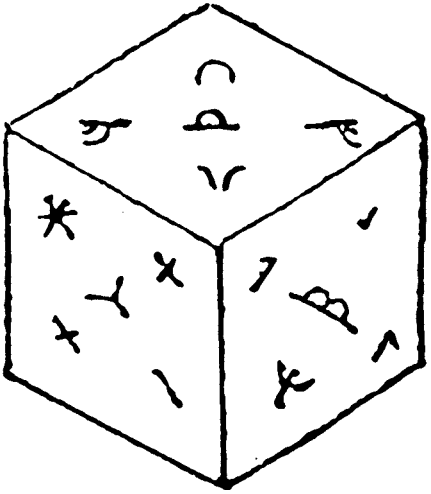
Johannes Bureus (1568-1652) was a predecessor to Verelius. On behalf of the Swedish king he traveled around in Sweden and wrote down information about runic findings. Bureus was inspired by the Qabalah and alchemy and read the works of Agrippa, Paracelsus, Reuchlin and other writers of occultism. Through a com-

parison with the Qabalah he became convinced that the runes had different dimensions. He believed that they were letters for writing, but also esoteric, magical symbols. He called the secret dimension of the runes adul runes or noble runes. Bureus removed the last rune in the Scandinavian rune row and described a 15 stave rune row divided in three ættir with five runes each. The ættir represented the principle of giving birth (SW:födare), the birth (SW: födelse) and the foetus, that which is born (SW: foster). Bureus believed that the runes had been created in ancient days by a mythical figure named Byrger Tidesson. Bureus wrote a runic ABC-book and wanted the Swedish people to return to rune writing once again. This gained certain popularity among Swedish officers who used runic writing in secret messages during the Thirty Years War.

Bureus created magical symbols of the adul runes. They existed on something that he called "the falling stone", a symbol that revealed a cubic stone of which three sides are revealed, each depicting five runes in the shape of a cross. He also constructed a symbol that he called "adulruna" which contained the fifteen adul runes. The symbol can be compared to the Monas Hieroglyphica by John Dee, which contains all symbols of the planets. The adulruna of Bureus is a map of the universe and of mans progression through different levels of existence. The symbol as an idea is related to the Otz Chim of the Qabalah, the tree of life, and can also be a symbol of the Yggdrasil. The adul rune works both as a symbol of man and of the universe, the microcosm and macrocosm. As a centre in the symbol is the Hagal rune which according to Bureus means noble and is thus a pivotal adul rune. The Hagal rune in this form (ᚼ) is in the same way essential in later rune magic. Hagal has been associated with hail or with a seed that contains the other runes. In the adulruna of Bureus there is a path of hermetic progression. He developed a cross of adul runes where the vertical line describes the progression of the adept. The adept is heightened above the darkness of ignorance, tenebræ (ᛒ), through spendor (ᛏ), lumen (ᛁ), lux (ᛉ), luminare (ᚼ) and modus entis (ᛉ) to principum absolutæ primum (ᛟ). The last principle is equivalent to the Ain Soph of the Qabalah. The highest is represented by the God rune (ᛟ) that represents the spirit and the One. This corresponds to the Thor rune (Thurs) in



Adulruna

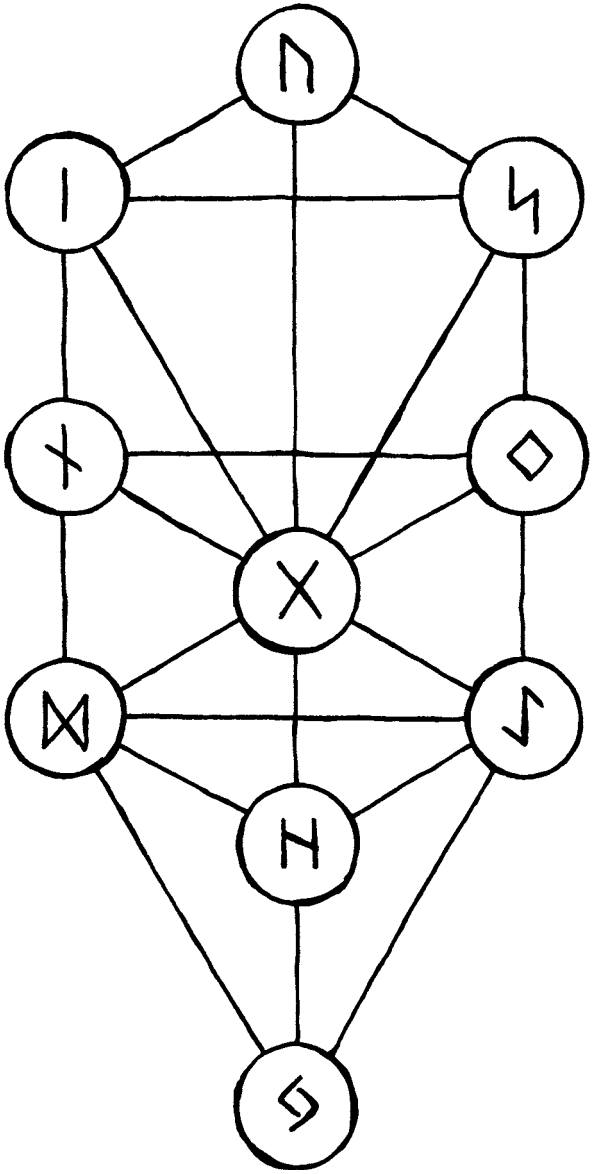


The falling stone

Bureus system and to Bureus Thor represented the highest deity. The lowest level is the material and dualistic plane which is symbolized by the horizontal Birch rune called Byrghall ( ). The goal in Bureus system is not to escape the lower level but to unite the high with the low, spirit with matter. The unification is symbolized by a rune where the two principles have become one ( ). Bureus constructed different runic sigils that described certain alchemistic and occult processes. From his rune-cross he developed a magical symbol which contains seven of the pivotal adul runes. The runes on the falling stone are constructed according to the same principle with five adul runes where one is in the centre, with two towards each other reversed are at the sides and one rune is above and one below. The symbol with the horizontal Birch rune (Byrghall) with the Man rune below can be interpreted as man ( ) and the divine archetypal plane ( ) that has been separated by matter and the plane of duality ( ). On each side is the upward-flowing ( ) and the downward-flowing ( ). The symbol corresponds to the qabalistic and hermetic world picture, and the description of man in Tantra. The fact that Bureus with the ( ) rune revealed that the secret of the goal with the adul runes was the unity of The One and the level of dualities, makes his system correspond to the draconian philosophy where the serpent and the eagle are united in the dragon, or where Shiva (The One) is united with Shakti (Duality) without the disintegration of any of the principles, but rather enabling the creation of the third, the synthesis.

The system of Bureus is called the gothic or götic Qabalah, and also the Uppsala Qabalah, Cabal Upsalica. If we, like Bureus, would consider the thought that there were obvious connections between the old Norse wisdom and the Qabalah, is it then possible to place the worlds of the Yggdrasil on the Sephiroth? This can surely be done if we in the same symbol will include its dark side, since the Nordic worlds are both light and dark.

Malkuth would correspond to Midgård, the material world of man. The rune that belongs to this level would be the rune of ecology and cycles; Jara ( ). Above Malkuth we can find Yesod and Gamaliel, representing the moon and the world of dreams. This level is con-



nected to the astral plane and the world of the dead but also to the dark goddesses. The old Norse world that could be placed here is Helheim, the realm of death, with the dark goddess Hel. The rune that corresponds to this level is Hagal (ᚺ) or (ᛯ). Above Yesod we can find Hod-Samael and Netzach-A'arab Zaraq. Basically, they represent the intellect and feelings respectively. They are opposites and are constantly interacting. Here we can place Ljusalfheim (Hod) that rules thoughts and reason, and Svartalfheim (Netzach) that represents feelings and passions. The rune of Ljusalfheim and the intellect is the Dagaz rune (ᛞ). The rune of Svartalfheim is the yew tree rune (ᛇ). In the middle of the qabalistic tree is the sphere of the sun Tiphareth-Thagirion, which represents the Self or the Daemon. This belongs to the mental plane and the sphere of the heavens and its symbol is the mandala, the sun-cross (⊕). The Nordic world that can be placed here is Asgård and the Gifu rune (ᚷ). On each side is Geburah-Golachab and Chesed-Gha'agsheblah. They correspond to the principles of suffering and lust. The sphere of suffering can be represented by Jotunheim, the world of the giants and the Naud rune (ᚾ) Chesed-Gha'agsheblah corresponds to Vanaheim. The Vanirs are the gods controlling fertility and experiences of lust, but also witchcraft. The rune for this sphere is the seed rune Ing (ᛜ). The highest level of the qabalistic tree begins with a couple of counterparts representing nothingness and being, female and male, passive and active. Binah-Satariel and Chokmah-Ghagiel. Binah-Satariel corresponds to Nifelheim which is the extreme polarity of stillness, passivity, cold and darkness. Its rune is the Ice rune (ᛁ). Chokmah-Ghagiel is connected to fire and the sphere of extreme activity, Muspelheim. The rune belonging to this sphere is the Sun rune (ᛋ). So far we have placed the nine worlds of the Nordic tradition on the qabalistic tree. The tenth level which is the first and highest in the Qabalah is Kether-Thaumiel. This level is the all-potential; the seed of becoming that unites being and nothingness. This level is connected to the state beyond the worlds : Ain Soph. In the Nordic myths this level corresponds to Ginnungagap, the great abyss where the worlds are created through a meeting between the polarities fire and ice. Ginnungagap is the pure energy that flows through everything. The first being that is created in the Ginnungagap is Ymer. He is a twin-being and we can here find a connection

to Thaumiel, which denotes the "twin-god".

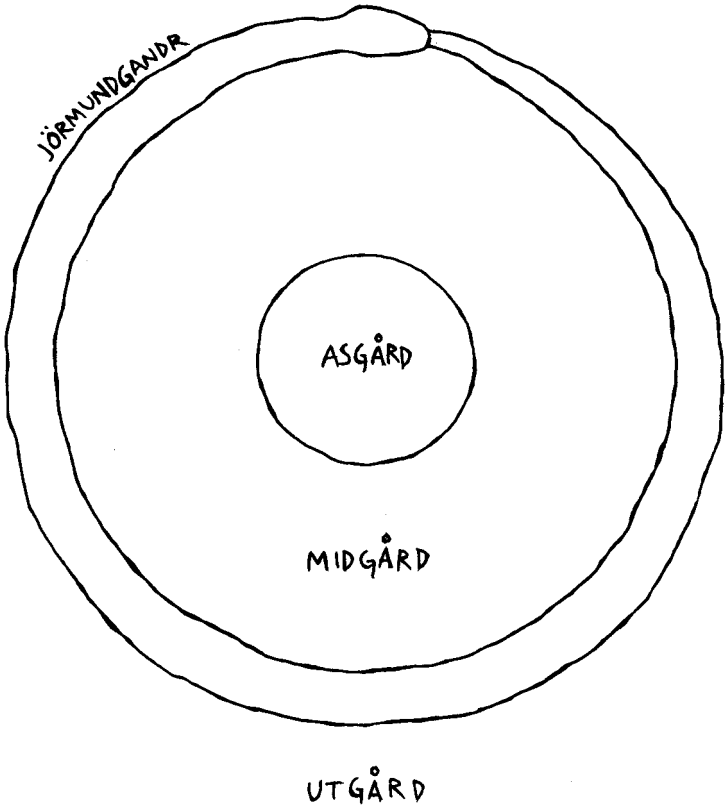
If one is comparing, from a magical perspective, runosophy with the old Norse and gothic magic, one will see that the parallels' that Johannes Bureus found between the Qabalah and the runes are very interesting. This connection can be used to achieve a more complete occult world picture. Many rune magicians have found parallels between the runes and the Qabalah. The runemystic Guido von List believed in this theory and saw himself as a reincarnation of the qabalist Reuchlin. From a numerological perspective one can find many revealing keys that will point out similarities between the dark sides of the Qabalah and Odinic runosophy.

Chapter 9

THE UTHARK AND THE NIGHTSIDE OF RUNES

An important and in many respects unique feature in runosophy and Nordic magic is its relation to the dark side. Most spiritual traditions focus mainly on the gods and principles of the light and tend to view the nightside of existence as something to avoid. In the Nordic tradition we can rather see an attitude where the dark is viewed as a prerequisite of illumination, a thought that echoes in the words of the psychologist C.G Jung: "One does not reach illumination by visualizing the light but through exploring the darkness". This is the attitude that can be found in the mysteries of Odin's initiation. Through self-sacrifice and encounters with giants and powers of the underworld, Odin increased his knowledge. Odin reaches an illumination in the secrets of the runes through a journey to the dark regions. In the same way the modern rune magician must seek the wisdom of the runes in the nightside of existence.

What then, is light and what is darkness? There is an infinite number of prejudices regarding these two intellectually and emotionally charged terms. A common thought is that the light represents good and the dark represents evil. This is a reflection of monotheistic dualism where darkness and light stands in extreme opposition of an ethical character. In the Nordic tradition, creation is thought to have arisen through the meeting of two opposites, the realm of fire and the realm of ice. Existence is only threatened if the balance between these two extremes is in danger. The Nordic gods do not represent the infinitely good, but are more nuanced and have both light and dark aspects. Odin, the most important god in runosophy, is a dark and demonic god who is feared by most people. He is a dark wanderer whose deeds are difficult to predict and he is the god of the hanged and dead. Odin is surrounded by attributes, like ravens


JÖRMUNDGANDR
ASGÅRD
MIDGÅRD
UTGÅRD

and wolfs, which in the history of religions are usually connected to dark entities. He is spoken of as the all father, but he has a dark function besides the light god Tyr.

In the myths, the light represents order and harmony. The world of man belongs to the light sphere, but is infiltrated and attacked by dark elements trying to break in and create chaos. The world of the gods is the highest, utmost light and represents a perfect order. This world is often viewed as being located high up in the skies or on top of a mountain. The world of the gods is in the centre and at the highest point. The gods of light are usually worshipped through prayer or are called upon as ideals and protectors of order and structure. The gods of light are often pictured in a perfect anthropomorphous shape. The dark represents chaos. This is the wild nature and the cold infinity which surrounds the world of man. While the world of the gods has limits, the dark side is characterized by its limitlessness. The dark side is inhabited by powerful entities, which are often described as both brutal and extremely wise. They are older than the gods of light and are often non-anthropomorhic characters, in the form of mythological animals or bestial demons. Dragons and giant-like creatures usually inhabit the dark worlds. These worlds are outside and beyond the world of man. They might exist beyond the oceans or in the underworld. On a psychological level, the world of the gods of light is our ideals and the super-ego, the world of man is our mundane consciousness with its limitations, while the dark side represents the unconscious. In the Nordic mythology three strongholds are illustrating the three different principles:

Asgård: The world of the gods. The light. Ideals and the super-ego.

Midgård: The world of man. Mundane consciousness and the limited mind.

Utgård: The world of the giants. The dark. The wild and limitless. The unconscious.

In the Nordic tradition the importance of the dark forces is evident. By traveling to the spheres of the dark, the gods are enhancing their

power. The walls of Asgård are even built by a giant, which reveals how the gods need the dark forces to protect themselves from the very same. The giants are not mere primitive forces, as they are sometimes described to be. They are also in possession of an ancient wisdom. The primordial giant Mimer is the wisest of all beings and Odin sacrifices his eye in his well in Jotunheim to gain this wisdom. To reach illumination Odin is constantly diving straight down into the dark depths.

Helwegr

While many spiritual traditions are striving up towards the perfect heights of the light, Odin teaches us to seek in the dark. In the Havamal the hanged Odin tells us that he sent his eye down into the depths and picked up the runes. This is a journey to the roots of the world tree and the underworld. Hel is a central character in the Odinic initiation. She is the dark goddess of the underworld and the dark opposite to Odin. Her name means "the hidden one" and she represents the dark and unknown parts of existence. Hel can also be interpreted as "whole" or "hole". She is the goddess of the tunnels and holes of the underworld. She is the dark mother and her womb will give birth to reborn gods. She also represents the completion where death and life are united. The kingdom of Hel can be found beyond the two gates of life: birth and death. Life and renewal take place in the realm of darkness. The light god Balder is killed by the blind god Höder. During a game where the invulnerability of Balder is tried, Loke uses his cunning to make Höder shoot an arrow of mistletoe against Balder. The mistletoe is the only thing able to hurt Balder and he dies. But instead of going to Valhall, he is pulled down into Hel. Hermod, the son of Odin, travels to Hel to try to bring Balder back. But only after Ragnarök will Balder return, together with his dark companion Höder.

Hermod rides upon Odin's eight-legged horse, Sleipner, down on the pitch-black Helwegr, the road to Hel, for nine days. Here we can find an interesting runosophical symbolism and numerology. The nine day long journey of Hermod represents the nine days that Odin

hangs in the Yggdrasil. Sleipner is the steed of Odin and the name of the world tree means exactly that, the steed of Yggr-Odin. Here we can find a magical symbolism where the horse represents the tree. The steed is the same as the wand of the witches, with which they travel to other worlds. But the wand is more than just a witch's broom. This is the world-pillar which runs between the worlds and which unites the dimensions of life and death. In man, this partly represents the spine which connects our instinct-centre to the brain and the thought-functions; the unconscious and the subconscious to the conscious and the super-ego. Sleipner has eight legs. This is a symbolism that is recurrent in different shamanistic and magical traditions as a symbol of the possibility to ride both in this world and in the realms of death and the unknown. It is also interesting to note that at a funeral, the corpse was often carried by four men which can be connected to the eight-legged horse which takes the deceased to the other side. Eight is also the number of runes in each ætt and certain aspects of Sleipner correspond to the Hagal rune. If we add the number of legs of the horse that takes the deceased to the other side, with the number of days that the journey takes, we have a key to the Helwegr. Nine is 3 x 3. If we multiply 8 with 3 we will get the number of runes of the rune row, 24. If we multiply 8 with 3 x 3 (9) it makes 72: a very interesting number in runosophy and also if we would like Bureus, connect it with Qabalistic numerology. In runosophy it is interesting since the number 72 denotes every rune in the rune row with its threefold significance. Every rune has a light, dark and neutral pole. 72 is also one of the most important numbers in the Qabalah and it is the foundation of the black magic of the Goetia grimoire. The magical connections between the gothic and the goetic magic are explored in Dragon Rouge. A central character in these traditions is the legendary magician Faust. In Faustian magic, elements of goetic demonology are united with gothic runosophy.

Even without numerological speculations, we can draw the conclusion that the rune row is a Helwegr - a Hel-path. It can lead one down to the centre of the underworld and back again. The rune row is a path of initiation where the magician like Odin, gazes down into the dark depths and picks up rune after rune in the journey to and back from Hel. The secrets that the concealed goddess Hel keeps in her womb are thus accessed by the magician. The descent into the

underworld can represent the journey of the sun to the darkest night of December and its rebirth in spring, but above all it represents a deep alchemistic process of transformation where the initiate creates himself and reaches divinity. Odinic rune magic can be interpreted from numerous angles. To reach an explicit understanding of the descent to Hel, as illustrated by the runes, one should observe them positioned in twelve circles inside each other with the opposite couples on each side as previously mentioned. The runes can be visualized or work as keys during a drum-journey in which the magician should be in a room which is completely darkened and meditate to the monotonous rhythm of a drum. The Uthark have been interpreted as the dark and inner version of the rune row. It begins with two very dark runes which symbolizes the descent to the dark worlds. The Uthark ends with two exact opposites to these runes which represent the ascent from the underworld and the illumination in the secrets of the runes.

UR: With the Ur rune the descent into the underworld begins. The Ur rune symbolizes the gate to the underworld. The Ur rune is the rune of beginning processes. Here everything is yet unfulfilled and concealed. Ur belongs to Urd, the goddess of fate, and the rune represents how we are seeking to enter into the well of Urd during our search for the wisdom she keeps in the hidden and the past.

THURS: With the Thurs rune the gate is opening. This is the rune of the biune and it symbolizes how we are creating a crack in existence to gaze into the dark. Thurs is the opposite rune of Dagaz, they represent night and day respectively. Thurs is the gate to darkness.

AS: The As rune symbolizes the adept who like Odin lowers himself down into the depths. The As rune is the breath that the magician inhales to enter the trance. As rune number three in the Uthark, it also represents the three ættir that the magician is on his way to explore.

REID: The journey has begun and the magician rides on the back of Sleipner or Yggdrasil down on the Helwegr, or like Thor to Utgård. The rune represents the rhythm of breathing, the heartbeats and the rhythm of the drum. It also keeps the magician from loosing energy and helps keeping order during the journey down to the realms of

death or the forces of chaos.

KEN: With his Will, the magician lights a torch down in the dark tunnels. Ken represents the Will, the knowledge and the inner light which prevents the magician from being lost in the maze of the underworld.

GIFU: This is the rune which symbolizes the core of the initiation. Like Odin, the magician sacrifices himself to himself. By self-sacrifice the magician can reach illumination in the secrets of the runes. The magician must give himself to gain himself. Through a symbolic and magical death, the magician can arise as his own creation. Gifu also represents the soul-gifts given by the three gods. On this level the magician sacrifices himself. The opposite rune is the Man rune: Mannaz. On the Mannaz-level the magician is reborn with all soul-gifts in full power.

WYNJA: Wynja represents not only joy and harmony, but also the Will and its power to make wishes come true. During the initiation, Wynja represents the magical Will which makes the Odinic self-sacrifice possible on the way to deep insights. Wynja represents the Will to cross the underworld river Gjöll. Wynja opens the Gjallar-bridge which is guarded by the maiden Modgunn who asks all travelers about their name and family.

HAGAL: This rune is pivotal in the initiation. It represents the seed to all runes. The runes are frozen potentialities inside Hagal. Through the magician, the runes can be made into actualities. Hagal concludes the first ætt of the Uthark and corresponds to the gate to Hel. Hagal symbolizes the first meeting with the dark goddess Hel.

NAUD: The initiate is approaching the deepest parts of Helheim. The ninth rune represents the nine days long journey of Hermod or Odin's ninth and final day in the world tree. The magician encounters the three Norns who are weaving the web of fate. The threads of fate are the foundation of the runes. At this stage the initiate can influence fate through the threads.

IS: Down in the deepest parts of Hel the dark and cold world of Nifelheim opens up. Here one experiences the extreme cold and everything is frozen. The darkest force of existence, the dragon

Nidhögg can be found here, gnawing on the roots of the world tree.

JARA: The eleventh rune in the Uthark represents in this cyclic aspect the well of Vergelmer which can be found in Nifelheim. This cyclic rune reveals that eleven streams that carry the seed of creation and rebirth are flowing from the utmost cold.

PERTRO: At Pertro, the magician finds himself at the centre of the underworld. This is the bottom of the well of Urd and the deepest parts of Hel. Pertro is the innermost hole of the underworld and the womb of Hel. This is the twelfth rune in the Uthark and here the runes are born. This is the grave where the magician dies and the womb where he is reborn as his own creation. Pertro represents the Winter Solstice. Pertra is a dark goddess who rides together with Odin in the wild hunt, when the dead are raging the woods on the darkest night of the year. Pertra is an alter-ego of Hel.

EIHWAZ: Also Eihwaz corresponds to the Winter Solstice and the night sky. This rune symbolizes the Yggdrasil and the hallucinatory trance in which the magician now finds himself, deep down in the deepest levels of the darkness of the underworld. It also symbolizes the spear of Odin and a tool with which one can pick up the runes. This rune is also connected to the wild hunt and its ecstasy.

ALGIZ: This rune symbolizes the reborn magician who creates himself. He stretches himself up towards the sun and the heat. The darkest and coldest phase of the night has passed. The magician has visited the inner of Helheim and can now return. This rune represents sacredness and divinity, which characterizes the magician after his rebirth. The magician has now made himself divine. The rune has been used as a symbol of birth.

SOL: The Sun rune is the opposite of the Ice rune. It represents the reborn divine nature of the magician, where the higher self has been united with the conscious self. The Sun rune represents the force of the magician which arises like lightning or a snake up from the underworld.

TYR: The power rises up through the world tree or the magician's spine. The word Tyr means god and the Tyr rune embodies the new nature of the magician, as a god. The magician formulates his law

and creates a new order.

BJARKA: The Birch is the first tree that returned after the ice-age. In the same way the Birch rune symbolizes how the magician through his force and power as a god makes the world verdant again according to his Will. This is also the rune of witchcraft and it is connected to Freya's knowledge about the art of sejd, which is the prerequisite of Odin's initiation in the secrets of the runes.

EH: The eighteenth rune represents the eighteen rune-songs that Odin receives during his initiation. The Horse rune is connected to Sleipner and Yggdrasil and the journey out of the underworld.

MANNAZ: The magician has united the hidden forces with his human nature. The magician has reached the state of the perfect man, where the hidden forces are controlled by the magician and his Will. The magician can here fully use the soul gifts that he was given by the three gods, but which were before unconscious and beyond his control.

LAGU: The Water rune balances its opposite, Ken. Here, Lagu symbolizes Odrörir and the magical mead which brings inspiration and wisdom to the magician.

ING: Ing is a sex magical rune which symbolizes the ecstasy and orgasm that the magician experiences and channels. This orgasmic force is focused to the Will-centre of the magician and thus it awakes the all-seeing eye. The magician reaches, in a spiritual sense, a royal level and becomes a lord or a lady, like Frey or Freya.

ODAL: The magician accomplishes and manifests his Will in a magical kingdom. This can be the magician's temple or the group of magicians that he works with. The magician reaches, in a magical sense, Valhall.

DAGAZ: We have now reached the opposite of the Thurs rune. Dagaz denotes the illumination of that which has previously been concealed in the dark.

FEHU: The magician has integrated and learnt how to control the dark and wild forces. The powers of death and darkness can be used to serve the magician in accordance with his Will. The magician has reached a state of completion and reward, in return for his self-sacrifice.

POSTSCRIPT

The runes are multi-dimensional. The magician should not over-emphasize their shape. Only by studying and exploring the different aspects of the runes both in theory and practise will one be able to open the gates to the secrets of the runes. Runosophy is in itself an Helwegr where the magician through his work step by step enters the dark depths of the runes. This is a long process that will reveal many different phases. When you believe you have reached the bottom, new depths are discovered. When you think you are at the end of a path, you will realize that the journey has just begun. The knowledge about the runes is not linear, it is cyclic. When you stand before the completion of Fehu, the gates of Ur will open.

This book was to a large extent written on the island of Gotland, the great island in the Baltic sea which bears Odin's epithet "got". On this island, the oldest and most remarkable runic findings have been made. In an over-grown grove the flat gravestone which unlike other inscriptions had its carvings on the inside, hidden from the eyes of the world, was found. This stone is the only archeological finding that possibly reveals an Uthark. The unique picture-stones which have revealed a great view of the old Norse tradition, were also found on Gotland. One of these stones is depicting the ancient goddess, holding one serpent in each hand. Perhaps she is illustrating something essential of the Nordic spirituality.

A dark goddess like Hel is the key to the wisdom of the underworld. She holds the reptilian forces, concealed inside of us which can transcend us into the world of the gods. If we, like Odin, gaze down into the depths, we can reach illumination in the darkest blackness, in the deep we can find the path to the highest peaks.

It is of course very rewarding to be able to live and work magically in an area like Gotland, where runes were carved in ancient times

and which once belonged to ancient mysterious gods. But the runes are not limited to any place or time. The secrets of the runes are accessible to all those striving with an iron-will like Odin, who dares to gaze down in the dark depths of the unknown and into the depth of themselves to find the force and wisdom of the runes.

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About the Author

Thomas Karlsson, M.A. in the History of Ideas at the University of Stockholm. Founder of the Magic Order Dragon Rouge. He has studied and practiced the Occult Arts for more than 15 years. He holds lectures and courses on a regular basis and is editing a Swedish esoteric magazine.

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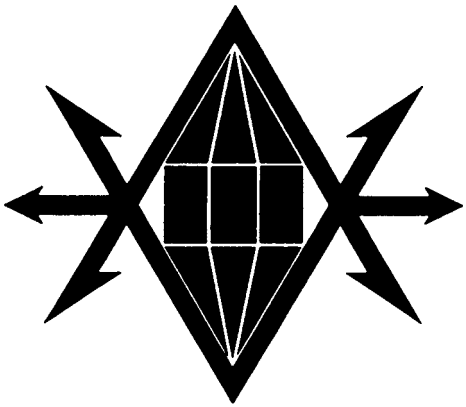

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